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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

William Shakespeare

With a Life of the Poet, Ex-
planatory Foot=notes, Critical
Notes and a Glossarial Index

BY THE
REV. HENRY N. HUDSON, LL. D.

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JULIUS CÆSAR



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JULIUS CÆSAR.

FIRST printed in the folio of 1623, and one of the best-printed plays in that inestimable volume; the text being in so clear and sound a state, that editors have but little trouble about it. The date of the composition has been variously argued, some placing it in the middle period of the Poet's labours, others among the latest; and, as no clear contemporary notice or allusion had been produced, the question could not be positively determined. It is well known that the original *Hamlet* must have been written as early as 1602; and in iii. 2 of that play Polonius says "I did enact Julius Caesar: I was killed in the Capitol; Brutus killed me." As the play now in hand lays the scene of the stabbing in the Capitol, it is not improbable, to say the least, that the Poet had his own *Julius Cæsar* in mind when he wrote the passage in *Hamlet*. And that such was the case is made further credible by the fact, that Polonius speaks of himself as having enacted the part when he "play'd once in the University," and that in the title-page of the first edition of *Hamlet* we have the words, "As it hath been divers times acted in the city of London; as also in the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford." Still the point cannot be affirmed with certainty; for there were several earlier plays on the subject, and especially a Latin play on Cæsar's death, which was performed at Oxford in 1582.

Collier argued that Shakespeare's play must have been on the stage before 1603, his reason being as follows. Drayton's *Mortimeriadas* appeared in 1596. The poem was afterwards recast by the author, and published again in 1603 as *The Barons' Wars*. The recast has the following lines, which were not in the original form of the poem :

Such one he was, of him we boldly say,
In whose rich soul all sovereign powers did suit,

In whom in peace *the elements all lay*
So mix'd, as none could sovereignty impute:
 That's seem'd, when Heaven his model first began,
 In him it show'd *perfection in a man*.

Here we have a striking resemblance to what Antony says of Brutus in the play :

His life was gentle; and *the elements*
So mix'd in him, that *Nature* might stand up
 And say to all the world, *This was a man!*

Collier's theory is, that Drayton, before recasting his poem, had either seen the play in manuscript or heard it at the theatre, and so caught and copied the language of Shakespeare.

I confess there does not seem to me any great strength in this argument; for the idea and even the language of the resembling lines was so much a commonplace in the Poet's time, that no one could claim any special right of authorship in it. Nevertheless it is now pretty certain that the play was written as early as 1601, Mr. Halliwell having lately produced the following from Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs*, which was printed that year :

The many-headed multitude were drawn
 By Brutus' speech, that Cæsar was ambitious:
 When eloquent Mark Antony had shown
 His virtues, who but Brutus then was vicious?

As there is nothing in the history that could have suggested this, we can only ascribe it to some acquaintance with the play: so that the passage may be justly regarded as decisive of the question.

The style alone of the drama led me to rest in about the same conclusion long ago. For it seems to me that in *Julius Cæsar* the diction is more gliding and continuous, and the imagery more round and amplified, than in the dramas known to have been of the Poet's latest period. But these distinctive notes are of a nature to be more easily felt than described; and to make them felt examples will best serve. Take, then, a sentence from the soliloquy of Brutus just after he has pledged himself to the conspiracy :

"Tis a common proof,
 That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,

Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
But, when he once attains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend.

Here we have a full, rounded period in which all the elements seem to have been adjusted, and the whole expression set in order, before any part of it was written down. The beginning foresees the end, the end remembers the beginning, and the thought and image are evolved together in an even continuous flow. The thing is indeed perfect in its way, still it is not in Shakespeare's latest and highest style. Now compare with this a passage from *The Winter's Tale*:

When you speak, sweet,
I'd have you do it ever: when you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so; so give alms;
Pray so; and for the ordering your affairs,
To sing them too: when you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that; move still, still so, and own
No other function.

Here the workmanship seems to make and shape itself as it goes along, thought kindling thought, and image prompting image, and each part neither concerning itself with what has gone before, nor what is coming after. The very sweetness has a certain piercing quality, and we taste it from clause to clause, almost from word to word, as so many keen darts of poetic rapture shot forth in rapid succession. Yet the passage, notwithstanding its swift changes of imagery and motion, is perfect in unity and continuity.

Such is, I believe, a fair illustration of what has long been familiar to me as the supreme excellence of Shakespeare's ripest, strongest, and most idiomatic style. *Antony and Cleopatra* is pre-eminently rich in this quality; but there is enough of it in *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Coriolanus*, and *Cymbeline*, to identify them as belonging to the same stage and period of authorship. But I can find hardly so much as an earnest of it in *Julius Cæsar*; and nothing short of very strong positive evi-

dence would induce me to class this drama with those, as regards the time of writing.

The historic materials of the play were drawn from *The Life of Julius Cæsar*, *The Life of Marcus Brutus*, and *The Life of Marcus Antonius*, as set forth in Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch. This work, aptly described by Warton as "Shakespeare's storehouse of learned history," was first printed in 1579, and reprinted in 1595, 1603, and 1612, not to mention several later editions. The translation was avowedly made, not directly from the Greek, but from the French version of Jaques Amiot, Bishop of Auxerre. The book is among our richest and freshest literary monuments of that age; and, apart from the use made of it by Shakespeare, is in itself an invaluable repertory of honest, manly, idiomatic English. In most of the leading incidents of the play, the charming old Greek is minutely followed; though in divers cases those incidents are worked out with surpassing fertility of invention and art. But, besides this, in many places the Plutarchian form and order of thought, and also the very words of North's racy and delectable old English, are retained.

It may be well to add, that on the 13th of February, B.C. 44, the feast of Lupercalia was held, when the crown was offered to Cæsar by Antony. On the 15th of March following, Cæsar was slain. In November, B.C. 43, the Triumvirs, Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus, met on a small island near Bononia, and there made up their bloody proscription. The overthrow of Brutus and Cassius, near Philippi, took place in the Fall of the next year. So that the events of the drama cover a period of something over two years and a half.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

JULIUS CÆSAR.	FLAVIUS and MARULLUS, Tribunes.
OCTAVIUS CÆSAR,	ARTEMIDORUS, a Sophist of Cnidos.
MARCUS ANTONIUS,	A Soothsayer.
M. AEMIL. LEPIDUS,	CINNA, a Poet. Another Poet.
CICERO, PUBLIUS, POPILIUS LENA,	LUCILIUS, TITINIUS, MESSALA,
Senators.	young CATO, and VOLUMNIUS,
MARCUS BRUTUS,	Friends to Brutus and Cassius.
CASSIUS,	VARRO, CLITUS CLAUDIUS, STRATO,
CASCA,	LUCIUS, DARDANIUS, Servants to
TREBONIUS,	Brutus.
LIGARIUS,	PINDARUS, Servant to Cassius.
DECIUS BRUTUS,	CALPURNIA, Wife to Cæsar.
METELLUS CIMBER,	PORTIA, Wife to Brutus.
CINNA,	

Senators, Citizens, Guards, Attendants, &c.

SCENE.—*During a great part of the Play, at Rome; afterwards at Sardis; and near Philippi.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Rome. A Street.*

Enter FLAVIUS, MARULLUS, and a throng of Citizens.

Flav. Hence ! home, you idle creatures, get you home :
Is this a holiday ? what ! know you not,
Being mechanical,¹ you ought not walk

¹ Shakespeare often uses adjectives with the sense of plural substantives ; as *mechanical* here for *mechanics* or *artizans*. The sense in the text is, "Know ye not that, being mechanics, you ought not," &c.

Upon a labouring-day without the sign
Of your profession? ² — Speak, what trade art thou?

1 Cit. Why, sir, a carpenter.

Mar. Where is thy leather apron and thy rule?
What dost thou with thy best apparel on? —
You, sir, what trade are you?

2 Cit. Truly, sir, in respect of³ a fine workman, I am
but, as you would say, a cobbler.

Mar. But what trade art thou? answer me directly.⁴

2 Cit. A trade, sir, that I hope I may use with a safe
conscience; which is, indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.

Mar. What trade, thou knave? thou naughty knave, what
trade?

2 Cit. Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me: yet,
if you be out, sir, I can mend you.⁵

Mar. What mean'st thou by that? mend me, thou saucy
fellow!

2 Cit. Why, sir, cobble you.

Flav. Thou art a cobbler, art thou?

2 Cit. Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl: I
meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters,
but with awl. I am, indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes;
when they are in great danger, I re-cover them. As proper⁶

² The Poet here transfers to Rome the English customs and usages of his own time; representing men in the several mechanic trades as having their guilds, with appropriate regulations and badges.

³ Here, as often, *in respect of* is equivalent to *in comparison with*.

⁴ *Cobbler*, it seems, was used of a coarse workman, or a *botcher*, in any mechanical trade. So that the Cobbler's answer does not give the information required.—*Directly* here has the sense of the Latin *directus*; *in a straightforward manner*, or *without evasion*.

⁵ Of course there is a play upon the two senses of *out* here. To be *out with* a man is to be *at odds* with him; to be *out at the toes* is to need a mending of one's shoes.

⁶ *Proper* for *handsome, goodly, or fine*. Commonly so in Shakespeare; at least when used of persons.

men as ever trod upon neat's-leather⁷ have gone upon my handiwork.

Flav. But wherefore art not in thy shop to-day?
Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?

2 Cit. Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes, to get myself into more work. But, indeed, sir, we make holiday, to see Cæsar, and to rejoice in his triumph.

Mar. Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?

What tributaries follow him to Rome,
To grace in captive bonds his chariot-wheels?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,
Your infants in your arms,⁸ and there have sat
The live-long day, with patient expectation,
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:
And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made an universal shout,
That⁹ Tiber trembled underneath her¹⁰ banks,
To hear the replication¹¹ of your sounds
Made in her concave shores?
And do you now put on your best attire?

⁷ *Neat's-leather* is what we call *cowhide* or *calskin*. *Neat* was applied to all cattle of the bovine genus. So in *The Winter's Tale*, i. 2: "The steer, the heifer, and the calf, are all call'd *neat*." And the word is still so used in "*neat's-foot oil*."

⁸ "Your infants *being* in your arms." Ablative absolute.

⁹ *That* with the force of *so that* or *insomuch that*. Often so used.

¹⁰ In classical usage the divinities of rivers were gods, and not goddesses. Old English usage, however, varies; Drayton making them mostly feminine; Spenser, masculine.

¹¹ *Replication* for *echo* or *reverberation*.—Here, as often, the infinitive *to hear* is used gerundively, and so is equivalent to *at hearing*.

And do you now cull out a holiday?¹²
 And do you now strew flowers in his way
 That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?¹³
 Be gone !
 Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
 Pray to the gods to intermit¹⁴ the plague
 That needs must light on this ingratitude.¹⁵

Flav. Go, go, good countrymen, and, for this fault,
 Assemble all the poor men of your sort ;
 Draw them to Tiber banks, and weep your tears
 Into the channel, till the lowest stream
 Do kiss the most exalted shores¹⁶ of all.—

[*Exeunt* Citizens.]

See, whâr their basest metal¹⁷ be not moved !
 They vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness.
 Go you down that way towards the Capitol ;
 This way will I : disrobe the images,
 If you do find them deck'd with ceremony.¹⁸

¹² "Do you cull out this time for a holiday?" is the meaning.

¹³ The reference is to the great battle of Munda, in Spain, which took place in March of the preceding year. Cæsar was now celebrating his fifth triumph, which was in honour of his final victory over the Pompeian faction. Cnæus and Sextus, the two sons of Pompey the Great, were leaders in that battle, and Cnæus perished.

¹⁴ *Intermit* is here equivalent to *remit*; that is, *avert*, or *turn back*.

¹⁵ It is evident from the opening scene, that Shakespeare, even in dealing with classical subjects, laughed at the classic fear of putting the ludicrous and sublime into juxtaposition. After the low and farcical jests of the saucy cobbler, the eloquence of Marullus "springs upwards like a pyramid of fire." — CAMPBELL.

¹⁶ The meaning is, "till your tears swell the river from the extreme low-water mark to the extreme high-water mark."

¹⁷ *Whâr* for *whether*. The contraction occurs repeatedly in this play.—In *basest metal* Shakespeare probably had *lead* in his thought. So that the meaning is, that even these men, though as *dull* and *heavy* as lead, have yet the sense to be tongue-tied with shame at their conduct.

¹⁸ These images were the busts and statues of Cæsar, ceremoniously decked with scarfs and badges in honour of his triumph.

Mar. May we do so?
 You know it is the feast of Lupercal.¹⁹
Flav. It is no matter ; let no images
 Be hung with Cæsar's trophies.²⁰ I'll about,
 And drive away the vulgar²¹ from the streets :
 So do you too, where you perceive them thick.
 These growing feathers pluck'd from Cæsar's wing
 Will make him fly an ordinary pitch ;²²
 Who else would soar above the view of men,
 And keep us all in servile fearfulness.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The Same. A public Place.*

Enter, in procession, with music, CÆSAR ; ANTONY, for the course ; CALPURNIA, PORTIA, DECIUS, CICERO, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and CASCA ; a great Crowd following, among them a Soothsayer.

Cæs. Calpurnia,—

Casca. Peace, ho ! Cæsar speaks. [*Music ceases.*]

Cæs. Calpurnia,—

Cal. Here, my lord.

Cæs. Stand you directly in Antonius' way,

¹⁹ This festival, held in honour of Lupercus, the Roman Pan, fell on the 15th of February, which month was so named from *Februus*, a surname of the god. Lupercus was, primarily, the god of shepherds, said to have been so called because he kept off the wolves. His wife Luperca was the deified she-wolf that suckled Romulus. The festival, in its original idea, was meant for religious expiation and purification, February being at that time the last month of the year.

²⁰ "Cæsar's trophies" are the scarfs and badges mentioned in note 18; as appears in the next scene, where it is said that the Tribunes "are put to silence for pulling scarfs off Cæsar's images."

²¹ The Poet often uses *vulgar* in its Latin sense of *common*. Here it means the common people.

²² *Pitch* is here a technical term in falconry, and means the highest flight of a hawk or falcon.

When he doth run his course.¹ — Antonius, —

Ant. Cæsar, my lord?

Cæs. Forget not, in your speed, Antonius,
To touch Calpurnia; for our elders say,
The barren, touchèd in this holy chase,
Shake off their sterile curse.²

Ant. I shall remember:
When Cæsar says *Do this*, it is perform'd.

Cæs. Set on; and leave no ceremony out. [Music.]

Sooth. Cæsar!

Cæs. Ha! who calls?

Casca. Bid every noise be still. — Peace yet again!

[Music ceases.]

Cæs. Who is it in the press that calls on me?
I hear a tongue, shriller than all the music,
Cry *Cæsar!* Speak; Cæsar is turn'd to hear.

Sooth. Beware the Ides of March.

Cæs. What man is that?

Bru. A soothsayer bids you beware the Ides of March.³

¹ Marcus Antonius was at this time Consul, as Cæsar himself also was. Each Roman *gens* had its own priesthood, and also its peculiar religious rites. The priests of the Julian *gens* (so named from Iulus the son of Æneas) had lately been advanced to the same rank with those of the god Lupercus; and Antony was at this time at their head. It was probably as chief of the Julian Luperci that he officiated on this occasion in "the holy course."

² It was an old custom at these festivals for the priests, all naked except a girdle about the loins, to run through the streets of the city, waving in the hand a thong of goat's hide, and striking with it such women as offered themselves for the blow, in the belief that this would prevent or avert "the sterile curse." — Cæsar was at this time childless; his only daughter, Julia, married to Pompey the Great, having died some years before, upon the birth of her first child, who also died soon after.

³ Coleridge has a remark on this line, which, whether true to the subject or not, is very characteristic of the writer: "If my ear does not deceive me, the metre of this line was meant to express that sort of mild philosophic contempt, characterizing Brutus even in his first casual speech." The metrical analysis of the line is, an Iamb, two Anapests, and two Iambs.

Cæs. Set him before me ; let me see his face.

Cass. Fellow, come from the throng ; look upon Cæsar.

Cæs. What say'st thou to me now ? speak once again.

Sooth. Beware the Ides of March.

Cæs. He is a dreamer ; let us leave him. — Pass.

[*Sennet.*⁴ *Exeunt all but BRUTUS and CASSIUS.*

Cass. Will you go see the order of the course ?

Bru. Not I.

Cass. I pray you, do.

Bru. I am not gamesome :⁵ I do lack some part
Of that quick⁶ spirit that is in Antony.

Let me not hinder, Cassius, your desires ;
I'll leave you.

Cass. Brutus, I do observe you now of late :
I have not from your eyes that gentleness
And show of love as⁷ I was wont to have :
You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand
Over your friend that loves you.⁸

Bru. Cassius,
Be not deceived : if I have veil'd my look,
I turn the trouble of my countenance

⁴ *Sennet* is an old musical term occurring repeatedly in Shakespeare ; of uncertain origin, but denoting a peculiar succession of notes on a trumpet, used, as here, to signal the march of a procession.

⁵ *Gamesome* is *fond of sport*, or *sportively inclined*. Repeatedly so.

⁶ *Quick* for *lively* or *animated*. So we have it in the phrases, “*quick recreation*,” and “*quick* and *merry words*.”

⁷ The demonstratives *this*, *that*, and *such*, and also the relatives *which*, *that*, and *as*, were often used indiscriminately. So a little later in this scene : “Under *these* hard conditions *as* this time is like to lay on us.”

⁸ This man, Caius Cassius Longinus, had married Junia, a sister of Brutus. Both had lately stood for the chief Prætorship of the city, and Brutus, through Cæsar's favour, had won it ; though Cassius was at the same time elected one of the sixteen Prætors or judges of the city. This is said to have produced a coldness between Brutus and Cassius, so that they did not speak to each other, till this extraordinary flight of patriotism brought them together.

Merely⁹ upon myself. Vexèd I am,
 Of late, with passions of some difference,¹⁰
 Conceptions only proper to myself,
 Which give some soil, perhaps, to my behaviours ;¹¹
 But let not therefore my good friends be grieved, —
 Among which number, Cassius, be you one, —
 Nor construe¹² any further my neglect,
 Than that poor Brutus, with himself at war,
 Forgets the shows of love to other men.

Cass. Then, Brutus, I have much mistook your passion ;¹³
 By means whereof¹⁴ this breast of mine hath buried
 Thoughts of great value, worthy cogitations.
 Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face ?

Bru. No, Cassius ; for the eye sees not itself
 But by reflection from some other thing.¹⁵

Cass. 'Tis just :¹⁶
 And it is very much lamented, Brutus,
 That you have no such mirror as will turn
 Your hidden worthiness into your eye,
 That you might see your shadow. I have heard,

⁹ Merely, here, is *altogether* or *entirely*. A frequent usage.

¹⁰ That is, *conflicting* passions ; such as his love to Cæsar personally, and his hatred of Cæsar's power in the State.

¹¹ " Which blemish or tarnish the lustre of my *manners*." The Poet repeatedly uses the plural, *behaviours*, for the particular acts which make up what we call behaviour. And so of several other words.

¹² In Shakespeare, and, I think, in all other poetry, *construe* always has the accent on the first syllable.

¹³ The Poet uses *mistook* and *mistaken* indiscriminately. He also sometimes uses *passion* for any feeling, sentiment, or emotion, whether painful or pleasant. So he has " more merry tears the *passion* of loud laughter nèver shed," and " free from gross *passion* or of mirth or anger."

¹⁴ *Means* was sometimes used in the sense of *cause* or *reason*. *Whereof* refers to the preceding clause.

¹⁵ By an image or " shadow " *reflected* from a mirror, or from water, or some polished surface.

¹⁶ 'Tis just is the same as our phrase, " That's so," or " Exactly so."

Where many of the best respect¹⁷ in Rome,—
Except immortal Cæsar,—speaking of Brutus,
And groaning underneath this age's yoke,
Have wish'd that noble Brutus had his eyes.

Bru. Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,
That you would have me seek into myself
For that which is not in me?

Cass. Therefore, good Brutus, be prepared to hear :
And, since you know you cannot see yourself
So well as by reflection, I, your glass,
Will modestly discover to yourself
That of yourself which you yet know not of.
And be not jealous on¹⁸ me, gentle Brutus :
Were I a common laugher, or did use
To stale¹⁹ with ordinary oaths my love
To every new protester ;²⁰ if you know
That I do fawn on men, and hug them hard,
And after scandal them ; or if you know
That I profess myself in banqueting
To all the rout,²¹ then hold me dangerous. [*Flourish and shout.*]

Bru. What means this shouting? I do fear, the people
Choose Cæsar for their king.

¹⁷ The sense probably is, "I have been present where many of the highest *repute*, or held in the highest consideration." *Respect* was often used so.—"Except immortal Cæsar!" is very emphatic, and intensely ironical.

¹⁸ *On* and *of* were used indifferently in such cases. *Jealous*, also, for *doubtful* or *suspicious*. So a little further on: "That you do love me, I am nothing *jealous*."

¹⁹ To *stale* a thing is to make it *common* or *cheap* by indiscriminate use. So in iv. 1, of this play: "Out of use, and *staled* by other men."—*Laugher*, if it be the right word, must mean *jestor* or *buffoon*. See Critical Notes.

²⁰ To *protest* occurs frequently in the sense of to *profess*, to *declare*, or to *vow*. The passage is well explained by one in *Hamlet*, i. 3: "Do not dull thy palm with entertainment of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade."

²¹ The order, according to the sense, is, "if you know that, in banqueting, I profess myself to all the rout."

Cass. Ay, do you fear it?
Then must I think you would not have it so.

Bru. I would not, Cassius ; yet I love him well.
But wherefore do you hold me here so long ?
What is it that you would impart to me ?
If it be aught toward the general good,
Set honour in one eye, and death i' the other,
And I will look on death indifferently ;
For, let the gods so speed²² me as I love
The name of honour more than I fear death.

Cass. I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,
As well as I do know your outward favour.²³
Well, honour is the subject of my story.
I cannot tell what you and other men
Think of this life ; but, for my single self,
I had as lief not be as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself.
I was born free as Cæsar ; so were you :
We both have fed as well ; and we can both
Endure the Winter's cold as well as he :
For once, upon a raw and gusty day,
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
Cæsar said to me, *Darest thou, Cassius, now
Leap in with me into this angry flood,
And swim to yonder point ?* Upon the word,
Accoutred as I was, I plungèd in,
And bade him follow : so indeed he did.
The torrent roar'd ; and we did buffet it
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside
And stemming it with hearts of controversy :²⁴

²² To speed for to prosper or bless ; a frequent usage.

²³ Favour for look, aspect, or appearance, was very common.

²⁴ That is, with contending hearts ; heart being put for courage. The Poet has many like expressions, as, "mind of love" for loving mind, &c.

But, ere we could arrive the point²⁵ proposed,
Cæsar cried, *Help me, Cassius, or I sink!*
I, as Æneas, our great ancestor,
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber
Did I the tirèd Cæsar : and this man
Is now become a god ; and Cassius is
A wretched creature, and must bend his body,
If Cæsar carelessly but nod on him.
He had a fever when he was in Spain ;²⁶
And, when the fit was on him, I did mark
How he did shake : 'tis true, this god did shake :
His coward lips did from their colour fly ;²⁷
And that same eye, whose bend doth awe the world,
Did lose his²⁸ lustre. I did hear him groan :
Ay, and that tongue of his, that bade the Romans
Mark him, and write his speeches in their books,
Alas, it cried, *Give me some drink, Titinius,*
As a sick girl.—Ye gods, it doth amaze me,
A man of such a feeble temper²⁹ should

²⁵ Shakespeare uses both *arrive* and *aspire* as transitive verbs, and in the sense of *reach* or *attain*. So Milton in *Paradise Lost*, ii. 409: "Ere he arrive the happy isle." See vol. xiii. page 185, note 12.

²⁶ *Fever* appears to have been used for *sickness* in general, as well as for what we call a fever. Cæsar had three several campaigns in Spain at different periods of his life, and the text does not show which of these Shakespeare had in mind. One passage in Plutarch would seem to infer that Cæsar was first taken with the epilepsy during his third campaign, which closed with the great battle of Munda, March 17, B.C. 45; but Plutarch elsewhere speaks of him as having the disease at an earlier period.

²⁷ The image, very bold, somewhat forced, and not altogether happy, is of a cowardly soldier running away from his flag.—*Bend* for *look*. The verb to *bend*, when used of the eyes, often has the sense of to *direct*.

²⁸ *His* for *its*, and referring to *eye*. *Its* was not then an accepted word, but was creeping into use; and the Poet has it several times.

²⁹ *Temper* for *constitution* or *temperament*.—"The lean and wrinkled Cassius" venting his spite at Cæsar, by ridiculing his liability to sickness and death, is charmingly characteristic. In fact, this mighty man, with all

So get the start of the majestic world,
And bear the palm alone. [Flourish and shout.]

Bru. Another general shout !
I do believe that these applauses are
For some new honours that are heap'd on Cæsar.

Cass. Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus ; ³⁰ and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
Men at some time are masters of their fates :
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, ³¹
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

Brutus, and *Cæsar* : what should be in that *Cæsar* ? ³²
Why should that name be sounded more than yours ?
Write them together, yours is as fair a name ;
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well ;
Weigh them, it is as heavy ; conjure with 'em,
Brutus will start a spirit as soon as *Cæsar*. ³³

his electric energy of mind and will, was of a rather fragile and delicate make ; and his countenance, as we have it in authentic busts, is almost a model of feminine beauty. Cicero, who did not love him at all, in one of his Letters applies to him a Greek word, the same that is used for *miracle* or *wonder* in the *New Testament* ; the English of the passage being, "This miracle (monster?) is a thing of terrible energy, swiftness, diligence."

³⁰ Observe the force of *narrow* here ; as if Cæsar were grown so enormously big that even the world seemed a little thing under him. Some while before this, the Senate had erected a bronze statue of Cæsar, standing on a globe, and inscribed to "Cæsar the Demigod" ; which inscription, however, Cæsar had erased.—The original Colossus was a bronze statue a hundred and twenty feet high, set up astride a part of the harbour at Rhodes, so that ships passed "under its huge legs."

³¹ Referring to the old astrological notion of planetary influence on the fortunes and characters of men. The Poet has many such allusions.

³² Meaning, "what is there in that word *Cæsar* ?" The Poet often uses *should be* where we should use *is* or *can be*.

³³ The allusion is to the old custom of muttering certain names, supposed to have in them "the might of magic spells," in raising or conjuring up spirits.

Now, in the names of all the gods at once,
 Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed,
 That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed!
 Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!
 When went there by an age, since the great flood,³⁴
 But it was famed with more than with one man?
 When could they say, till now, that talk'd of Rome,
 That her wide walls encompass'd but one man?
 Now is it Rome indeed, and room³⁵ enough,
 When there is in it but one only man.
 O, you and I have heard our fathers say,
 There was a Brutus once³⁶ that would have brook'd
 Th' eternal Devil to keep his state³⁷ in Rome
 As easily as a king.

Bru. That you do love me, I am nothing jealous;
 What you would work me to, I have some aim:³⁸
 How I have thought of this, and of these times,
 I shall recount hereafter; for this present,

³⁴ By this a Roman would of course mean Deucalion's flood.

³⁵ A play upon *Rome* and *room*, which appear to have been sounded more alike in Shakespeare's time than they are now. So again in iii. i: "A dangerous Rome, no Rome of safety for Octavius yet."

³⁶ Alluding to Lucius Junius Brutus, who bore a leading part in driving out the Tarquins, and in turning the Kingdom into a Republic. Afterwards, as Consul, he condemned his own sons to death for attempting to restore the Kingdom. The Marcus Junius Brutus of the play supposed himself to be lineally descended from him. His mother, Servilia, also derived her lineage from Servilius Ahala, who slew Spurius Mælius for aspiring to royalty. Merivale justly remarks that "the name of Brutus forced its possessor into prominence as soon as royalty began to be discussed."

³⁷ "Keep his state" may mean either preserve his dignity or set up his throne; *state* being repeatedly used for *throne*.—The Poet has *eternal* several times for *infernal*. Perhaps our Yankee phrases, "tarnal shame," "tarnal scamp," &c., are relics of this usage.

³⁸ "Work me to" is *persuade* or *induce* me to.—*Aim* is *guess*. So the verb in *Romeo and Juliet*, i. i: "I aim'd so near when I supposed you loved." And the Poet has it so in divers other places.

I would not, so with love I might entreat you,
 Be any further moved. What you have said,
 I will consider ; what you have to say,
 I will with patience hear ; and find a time
 Both meet to hear and answer such high things.
 Till then, my noble friend, chew upon this : ³⁹
 Brutus had rather be a villager
 Than to repute himself a son of Rome
 Under these hard conditions as this time
 Is like to lay upon us.

Cass. I am glad
 That my weak words have struck but thus much show
 Of fire ⁴⁰ from Brutus.

Bru. The games are done, and Cæsar is returning.
Cass. As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve ;
 And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you
 What hath proceeded ⁴¹ worthy note to-day.

Re-enter CÆSAR and his train.

Bru. I will do so. But, look you, Cassius,
 The angry spot doth glow on Cæsar's brow,
 And all the rest look like a chidden train :
 Calpurnia's cheek is pale ; and Cicero
 Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes ⁴²
 As we have seen him in the Capitol,

³⁹ To *chew* is, literally, to *ruminate* ; that is, *reflect* or *meditate*. So in *As You Like It*, iv. 3 : "Chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy."

⁴⁰ Referring to the use of steel and flint in starting a fire. So, in *Troilus and Cressida*, iii. 3, Thersites says of Ajax's wit, "It lies as coldly in him as fire in a flint, which will not show without knocking."

⁴¹ That is, hath *happened* or *come to pass*. Repeatedly so.

⁴² The ferret is a very ferocious little animal of the weasel kind, noted for its fire-red eyes.—The angry spot on Cæsar's brow, Calpurnia's pale cheek, and Cicero spouting fire from his eyes as when kindled by opposition in the Senate, make an exceedingly vivid picture.

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Caes. "Let me have men about me that are fat;
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights;
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous."

Julius Caesar. Act 1, Scene 2.

Page 21.

Being cross'd in conference by some Senator.

Cass. Casca will tell us what the matter is.

Cæs. Antonius,—

Ant. Cæsar?

Cæs. Let me have men about me that are fat ;
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights :
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look ;
He thinks too much : ⁴³ such men are dangerous.

Ant. Fear him not, Cæsar ; he's not dangerous ;
He is a noble Roman, and well given. ⁴⁴

Cæs. Would he were fatter ! but I fear him not :
Yet if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much ;
He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men : he loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony ; he hears no music : ⁴⁵
Seldom he smiles ; and smiles in such a sort
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit
That could be moved to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves ;

⁴³ So in North's Plutarch, *Life of Julius Cæsar* : " When Cæsar's friends complained unto him of Antonius and Dolabella, that they intended some mischief towards him, he answered them, As for those fat men, and smooth-combed heads, I never reckon on them ; but these pale-visaged and carion-lean people, I fear them most ; meaning Brutus and Cassius."

⁴⁴ *Well given* is *well disposed*. So in North's Plutarch : " If there were any noble attempt done in all this conspiracy, they refer it wholly unto Brutus ; and all the cruel and violent acts unto Cassius, who was Brutus's familiar friend, but not so *well given* and conditioned as he."

⁴⁵ The power of music is repeatedly celebrated by Shakespeare, and sometimes in strains that approximate the classical hyperboles about Orpheus, Amphion, and Arion. What is here said of Cassius has an apt commentary in *The Merchant of Venice*, v. 1 :

The man that hath no music in himself, &c.

And therefore are they very dangerous.
 I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd
 Than what I fear, for always I am Cæsar.
 Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,⁴⁶
 And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

[*Exeunt Cæsar and all his train, except Casca.*

Casca. You pull'd me by the cloak ; would you speak with me ?

Bru. Ay, Casca ; tell us what hath chanced to-day, That Cæsar looks so sad.⁴⁷

Casca. Why, you were with him, were you not ?

Bru. I should not, then, ask Casca what had chanced.

Casca. Why, there was a crown offer'd him ; and, being offer'd him, he put it by with the back of his hand, thus ; and then the people fell a-shouting.

Bru. What was the second noise for ?

Casca. Why, for that too.

Cass. They shouted thrice : what was the last cry for ?

Casca. Why, for that too.

Bru. Was the crown offer'd him thrice ?

Casca. Ay, marry, was't, and he put it by thrice, every time gentler than other ; and at every putting-by mine honest neighbours shouted.

Cass. Who offer'd him the crown ?

Casca. Why, Antony.

Bru. Tell us the manner of it, gentle Casca.

Casca. I can as well be hang'd as tell the manner of it : it was mere foolery ; I did not mark it. I saw Mark Antony offer him a crown ;— yet 'twas not a crown neither, 'twas one of these coronets ;— and, as I told you, he put it by once :

⁴⁶ This is one of the little touches of invention that so often impart a fact-like vividness to the Poet's scenes ; like that remarked in note 42.

⁴⁷ *Sad* in its old sense of *grave* or *serious*, probably. A frequent usage. See vol. xiii. page 131, note 18.

but, for all that, to my thinking, he would fain have had it. Then he offered it to him again ; then he put it by again : but, to my thinking, he was very loth to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered it the third time ; he put it the third time by : and still, as he refused it, the rabblement shouted, and clapp'd their chapp'd hands, and threw up their sweaty nightcaps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Cæsar refused the crown, that it had almost choked Cæsar ; for he swooned, and fell down at it : and, for mine own part, I durst not laugh, for fear of opening my lips and receiving the bad air.

Cass. But, soft !⁴⁸ I pray you : what, did Cæsar swoon ?

Casca. He fell down in the market-place, and foam'd at mouth, and was speechless.

Bru. 'Tis very like : he hath the falling-sickness.

Cass. No, Caesar hath it not ; but you, and I, And honest Casca, we have the falling-sickness.⁴⁹

Casca. I know not what you mean by that ; but I am sure Cæsar fell down. If the tag-rag people did not clap him and hiss him, according as he pleased and displeased them, as they use to do the players in the theatre, I am no true man.⁵⁰

Bru. What said he when he came unto himself ?

Casca. Marry, before he fell down, when he perceived the common herd was glad he refused the crown, he pluck'd

⁴⁸ *Soft!* was much used as an exclamation for arresting or retarding the speed of a person or thing ; meaning about the same as *hold!* *stay!* or *not too fast!* So in *Othello*, v. 2 : " *Soft* you ! a word or two before you go."

⁴⁹ Meaning the disease of "standing prostrate" before Cæsar. *Falling-sickness* or *falling-evil* was the English name for epilepsy. Cæsar was subject to it, especially in his later years, as Napoleon also is said to have been. See page 17, note 26.

⁵⁰ " *True man* " is *honest* man. Often used in that sense, but especially as opposed to *thief*. So in *Cymbeline*, ii. 3 : " 'Tis gold which makes the true man kill'd, and saves the thief ; nay, sometimes hangs both thief and *true man*." Also in *Venus and Adonis* : " Rich preys make true men thieves."

me ope his doublet,⁵¹ and offer'd them his throat to cut: an I had been a man of any occupation,⁵² if I would not have taken him at a word, I would I might go to Hell among the rogues: — and so he fell. When he came to himself again, he said, If he had done or said any thing amiss, he desired their Worships to think it was his infirmity.⁵³ Three or four wenches, where I stood, cried, *Alas, good soul!* and forgave him with all their hearts. But there's no heed to be taken of them: if Cæsar had stabb'd their mothers, they would have done no less.

Bru. And, after that, he came thus sad away?

Casca. Ay.

Cass. Did Cicero say any thing?

Casca. Ay, he spoke Greek.

Cass. To what effect?

Casca. Nay, an I tell you that, I'll ne'er look you i' the face again: but those that understood him smiled at one another, and shook their heads; but, for mine own part, it was Greek to me.⁵⁴ I could tell you more news too: Marullus and Flavius, for pulling scarfs off Cæsar's images, are

⁵¹ *Doublet* was the common English name of a man's upper outward garment. — In this clause, *me* is simply redundant.

⁵² "A man of occupation" probably means not only a mechanic or user of cutting-tools, but also a man of business and of action, as distinguished from a gentleman of leisure, or an idler.

⁵³ Thereupon Cæsar rising departed home to his house; and, tearing open his doublet-collar, making his neck bear, he cried out aloud to his friends, that his throat was ready to offer to any man that would come and cut it. Notwithstanding it is reported that, afterwards, to excuse his folly, he imputed it to his disease, saying that their wits are not perfect which have this disease of the falling-evil. — PLUTARCH.

⁵⁴ A charming invention. Cicero had a long, sharp, agile tongue, and was mighty fond of using it; and nothing was more natural, supposing him to have been present, than that he should snap off some keen sententious sayings; prudently veiling them however in a foreign language from all but those who might safely understand them. In fact, it was his incontinence of sarcasm that finally enraged Antony to the killing of him.

put to silence. Fare you well. There was more foolery yet, if I could remember it.

Cass. Will you sup with me to-night, Casca?

Casca. No, I am promised forth.⁵⁵

Cass. Will you dine with me to-morrow?

Casca. Ay, if I be alive, and your mind hold, and your dinner worth the eating.

Cass. Good; I will expect you.

Casca. Do so: farewell, both.

[*Exit.*]

Bru. What a blunt⁵⁶ fellow is this grown to be!

He was quick mettle when he went to school.

Cass. So is he now, in execution
Of any bold or noble enterprise,
However he puts on this tardy form.⁵⁷
This rudeness is a sauce to his good wit,
Which gives men stomach to digest his words
With better appetite.

Bru. And so it is. For this time I will leave you:
To-morrow, if you please to speak with me,
I will come home to you; or, if you will,
Come home to me, and I will wait for you.

Cass. I will do so: till then, think of the world.—

[*Exit BRUTUS.*]

Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I see,
Thy honourable metal may be wrought
From that it is disposed:⁵⁸ therefore 'tis meet

⁵⁵ Shakespeare has *forth* very often with the sense of *out* or *abroad*.

⁵⁶ *Blunt* here means, apparently, *dull* or *slow*; alluding to the "tardy form" Casca has just "put on" in winding so long about the matter before coming to the point.—"He was quick mettle" means, He was of a *lively spirit*. *Mettlesome* is still used of spirited horses.

⁵⁷ *However* for *although* or *notwithstanding*. Often so.—"Tardy form" is form of *tardiness*. So the Poet has *shady stealth* for *stealing shadow*, and "*negligent danger*" for *danger from negligence*.

⁵⁸ Wrought from *what*, or from that *which* it is disposed *to*. The Poet

That noble minds keep ever with their likes ;
 For who so firm that cannot be seduced ?
 Cæsar doth bear me hard,⁵⁹ but he loves Brutus :
 If I were Brutus now, and he were Cassius,
 He should not humour me.⁶⁰ I will this night,
 In several hands,⁶¹ in at his windows throw,
 As if they came from several citizens,
 Writings all tending to the great opinion
 That Rome holds of his name ; wherein obscurely
 Cæsar's ambition shall be glancèd at :
 And, after this, let Cæsar seat him sure ;
 For we will shake him, or worse days endure.⁶² [Exit.

has divers instances of prepositions thus omitted.—Cassius is here chuckling over the effect his talk has had upon Brutus.

⁵⁹ The phrase to *bear one hard* occurs three times in this play, but nowhere else in Shakespeare. It seems to have been borrowed from horsemanship, and to mean *carries a tight rein*, or *reins hard*, like one who *distrusts* his horse. So before : " You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand over your friend that loves you " ; that is, " You hold me too hard on the bit, like a strange rider, who is doubtful of his steed, and not like one who confides in his faithful horse, and so rides him with an easy rein." — For this note I am indebted to Mr. Joseph Crosby.

⁶⁰ To *humour* a man, as the word is here used, is to turn and wind and manage him by watching his moods and crotchetts, and touching him accordingly. It is somewhat in doubt whether the last *he* refers to Brutus or to Cæsar. If to Brutus, the meaning of course is, " he should not play upon my humours and fancies as I do upon his." And this sense is, I think, fairly required by the context. For the whole speech is occupied with the speaker's success in cajoling Brutus, and with plans for cajoling and shaping him still further.

⁶¹ *Hands* for *handwritings*, of course. The Poet has it repeatedly so.

⁶² " We will either shake him, or endure worse days in suffering the consequences of our attempt." — The Poet makes Cassius overflow with intense personal spite against Cæsar. This is in accordance with what he read in Plutarch : " Cassius, being a choleric man, and hating Cæsar privately more than he did the tyranny openly, incensed Brutus against him. It is also reported that Brutus could evil away with the tyranny, and that Cassius hated the tyrant." Of course *tyranny* as here used means *royalty*.

SCENE III.—*The Same. A Street.*

Thunder and lightning. Enter, from opposite sides, CASCA, with his sword drawn, and CICERO.

Cic. Good even, Casca: brought you Cæsar home?¹
Why are you breathless? and why stare you so?

Casca. Are you not moved, when all the sway of Earth
Shakes like a thing unfirm?² O Cicero,
I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds
Have rived the knotty oaks; and I have seen
Th' ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam,
To be exalted with the threatening clouds:³
But never till to-night, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
Either there is a civil strife in Heaven,
Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,
Incenses them to send destruction.⁴

Cic. Why, saw you any thing more⁵ wonderful

Casca. A common slave — you'd know him well by
sight⁶ —

Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn
Like twenty torches join'd; and yet his hand,
Not sensible⁷ of fire, remain'd unscorch'd.

¹ To bring for to escort or go along with was very common.

² Sway for constitution or order, probably. In such a raging of the elements, it seems as if the whole world were going to pieces, or as if the Earth's steadfastness were growing unfirm, that is, unsteady.

³ So as, or insomuch as to be exalted with the threatening clouds. The Poet often uses the infinitive mood thus. See vol. xiii. page 212, note 1.

⁴ Either the gods are fighting among themselves, or else they are making war on the world for being too saucy with them.

⁵ More is here equivalent to else: "Saw you any thing more that was wonderful?"

⁶ "You would recognize him as a common slave, from his looks."

⁷ Sensible, here, is sensitive, or having sensation. Repeatedly so.

Besides, — I ha' not since put up my sword, —
 Against the Capitol I met a lion,
 Who glared upon me, and went surly by,
 Without annoying me : and there were drawn
 Upon a heap⁸ a hundred ghastly women,
 Transformèd with their fear ; who swore they saw
 Men, all in fire, walk up and down the streets.
 And yesterday the bird of night⁹ did sit
 Even at noonday upon the market-place,
 Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies
 Do so conjointly meet, let not men say,
*These are their seasons ; they are natural ;*¹⁰
 For, I believe, they are portentous things
 Unto the climate¹¹ that they point upon.

Cic. Indeed, it is a strange-disposèd time :
 But men may construe things after their fashion,
 Clean¹² from the purpose of the things themselves.
 Comes Cæsar to the Capitol to-morrow ?

Casca. He doth ; for he did bid Antonius
 Send word to you he would be there to-morrow.

Cic. Good night, then, Casca : this disturbèd sky
 Is not to walk in.

⁸ That is, drawn *together in a crowd*. See vol. xii. page 101, note 3.

⁹ The old Roman horror of this bird is well shown in a passage of Holland's Pliny, as quoted in the Clarendon edition : "The screechowl beokeneth always some heavy news, and is most execrable in the presages of public affairs. In sum, he is the very monster of the night."

¹⁰ The meaning probably is, "These things *have* their seasons ; they proceed from natural causes." Casca refers to the doctrine of the Epicureans, who were slow to believe that such elemental pranks had any moral significance in them, or that moral causes had any thing to do with them ; and held that the explanation of them was to be sought for in the simple working of natural laws and forces.

¹¹ *Climate* for *region* or *country*. In *Hamlet* we have *climature* with the same meaning. Also "Christian climate" in *Richard the Second*, iv. 1.

¹² *Clean*, here, is *altogether*, *entirely*, or *quite*. Repeatedly so. See vol. x. page 188, note 2.

Casca. Farewell, Cicero. [Exit CICERO.]

Enter Cassius.

Cass. Who's there?

Casca. A Roman.

Cass. Casca, by your voice.

Casca. Your ear is good. Cassius, what night is this!¹³

Cass. A very pleasing night to honest men.

Casca. Who ever knew the Heavens menace so?

Cass. Those that have known the Earth so full of faults.

For my part, I have walk'd about the streets,
Submitting me unto the perilous night ;
And, thus unbrac'd,¹⁴ Casca, as you see,
Have bared my bosom to the thunder-stone :¹⁵
And, when the cross¹⁶ blue lightning seem'd to open
The breast of heaven, I did present myself
Even in the aim and very flash of it.

Casca. But wherefore did you so much tempt the
Heavens?

It is the part of men to fear and tremble,
When the most mighty gods, by tokens, send
Such dreadful heralds to astonish us.

Cass. You are dull, Casca ; and those sparks of life
That should be in a Roman you do want,
Or else you use not. You look pale, and gaze,
And put on fear, and case yourself in wonder,¹⁷

¹³ We should say, "What a night is this!" In such exclamative phrases, as also in some others, the Poet omits the article when his verse wants it so. See vol. v. page 183, note 17.

¹⁴ *Unbuttoned.* Shakespeare gives the Romans his own dressing-gear.

¹⁵ *Thunder-stone* is the old word for *thunder-bolt*.

¹⁶ *Cross* for the *zigzag path* of lightning. So in *King Lear*, iv. 7: "Was this a face to stand in the most terrible and nimble stroke of quick, *cross* lightning?"

¹⁷ That is, *put on a look* or *expression* of wonder. So in *Much Ado*, iv. 1: "I am so *attired in wonder*, I know not what to say."

To see the strange impatience of the Heavens :
But, if you would consider the true cause
Why all these fires, why all these gliding ghosts,
Why birds and beasts from quality and kind ;¹⁸
Why old men fool, and children calculate ;—
Why all these things change from their ordinance,
Their natures, and preformèd faculties,
To monstrous quality ;¹⁹—why, you shall find
That Heaven hath infused them with these spirits,
To make them instruments of fear and warning
Unto some monstrous state.²⁰ Now could I, Casca,
Name thee a man most like this dreadful night ;
That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars,
As doth the lion, in the capitol ;²¹
A man no mightier than thyself or me
In personal action ; yet prodigious grown,
And fearful, as these strange eruptions are.

Casca. 'Tis Cæsar that you mean, is it not, Cassius ?

Cass. Let it be who it is,²² for Romans now

¹⁸ *Quality* is *office* or *calling*. Often so. *Kind* is *nature*. Also frequent. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, last scene : "The worm will do his kind"; that is, will do as its *nature* is or prompts. The same in the old proverb, "The cat will after kind."—To make sense of the line, some word must be understood; probably *change*, from the second line below.

¹⁹ The grammar of this passage is rather confused, yet the meaning is clear enough; the general idea being that of elements and animals, and even of old men and children, acting in a manner out of or against their nature; or changing their natures and original faculties from the course, in which they were ordained to move, to monstrous or unnatural modes of action.

²⁰ That is, some prodigious or abnormal condition of things. Elsewhere the Poet has "enormous state," with the same meaning.

²¹ This reads as if a lion were kept in the Capitol to roar for them. But the meaning is that Cæsar roars in the Capitol, like a lion. Perhaps Cassius has the idea of Cæsar's claiming or aspiring to be among men what the lion is among beasts.

²² Meaning, probably, "no matter who it is"; as the Clarendon notes.

Have thews²³ and limbs like to their ancestors ;
But, woe the while ! our fathers' minds are dead,
And we are govern'd with our mothers' spirits ;
Our yoke and sufferance show us womanish.

Casca. Indeed, they say the Senators to-morrow
Mean to establish Cæsar as a king ;
And he shall wear his crown by sea and land,
In every place, save here in Italy.

Cass. I know where I will wear this dagger then ;
Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius :
Therein, ye gods, you make the weak most strong ;
Therein, ye gods, you tyrants do defeat :
Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit ;²⁴
But life, being weary of these worldly bars,
Never lacks power to dismiss itself.
If I know this, know all the world besides,
That part of tyranny that I do bear
I can shake off at pleasure.

[*Thunder still.*

Casca. So can I :
So every bondman in his own hand bears
The power to cancel his captivity.

Cass. And why should Cæsar be a tyrant then ?
Poor man ! I know he would not be a wolf,
But that he sees the Romans are but sheep :
He were no lion, were not Romans hinds.
Those that with haste will make a mighty fire
Begin it with weak straws :²⁵ what trash is Rome,

²³ *Thews* for *sinews* or *muscles*. See vol. xi. page 220, note 22.

²⁴ *Can retain, hold in, or repress* man's energy of soul.

²⁵ The idea seems to be that, as men start a huge fire with worthless straws or shavings, so Cæsar is using the degenerate Romans of the time, to set the whole world a-blaze with his own glory. Cassius's enthusiastic

What rubbish, and what offal, when it serves
 For the base matter to illuminate
 So vile a thing as Cæsar!²⁶ But, O grief,
 Where hast thou led me? I perhaps speak this
 Before a willing bondman: then I know
 My answer must be made; but I am arm'd,
 And dangers are to me indifferent.²⁷

Casca. You speak to Casca; and to such a man
 That is no fleering tell-tale.²⁸ Hold, my hand:
 Be factious for redress of all these griefs;²⁹
 And I will set this foot of mine as far
 As who goes farthest.

Cass. There's a bargain made.
 Now know you, Casca, I have moved already
 Some certain of the noblest-minded Romans
 To undergo³⁰ with me an enterprise
 Of honourable-dangerous consequence;
 And I do know, by this,³¹ they stay for me

hatred of "the mightiest Julius" is irresistibly delightful. For "a good hater" is the next best thing to a true friend; and Cassius's honest gushing malice is far better than Brutus's stabbing sentimentalism.

²⁶ To shed splendour upon him, or to make a light for him to shine by.

²⁷ The meaning is, "Perhaps you will go and blab to Cæsar all I have said about him; and then he will call me to account for it. Very well; go tell him; and let him do his worst: I care not."

²⁸ *Fleering* unites the two senses of *flattering* and *mocking*, and so is just the right epithet for a tell-tale, who flatters you into saying that of another which you ought not to say, and then mocks you by going to that other and telling what you have said.—The meaning of the next clause is, "Hold, *here is* my hand"; as men clasp hands in sealing a bargain.

²⁹ *Be factious* is, probably, *form a party or faction*. Or it may mean "Be active"; the literal meaning of *factious*.—Here, as often, *griefs* is put for *grievances*; that which *causes* griefs.

³⁰ *Undergo* for *undertake*. So in *2 Henry the Fourth*, i. 3: "How able such a work to *undergo*." And in several other places.

³¹ *By this* for by this *time*. So in various instances.—Pompey's porch was a spacious adjunct to the huge theatre that Pompey had built in the Campus Martius, outside of the city proper; and where, as Plutarch says,

In Pompey's porch : for now, this fearful night,
There is no stir or walking in the streets ;
And the complexion of the element
Is favour'd like ³² the work we have in hand,
Most bloody-fiery and most terrible.

Casca. Stand close ³³ awhile, for here comes one in haste.

Cass. 'Tis Cinna ; I do know him by his gait ;
He is a friend. —

Enter CINNA.

Cinna, where haste you so ?

Cin. To find out you. Who's that ? Metellus Cimber ?

Cass. No, it is Casca ; one incorporate ³⁴
To our attempt. Am I not stay'd for, Cinna ?

Cin. I'm glad on't. What a fearful night is this !
There's two or three of us have seen strange sights.

Cass. Am I not stay'd for ? tell me.

Cin. Yes,
You are. O, Cassius, if you could but win
The noble Brutus to our party, —

Cass. Be you content. Good Cinna, take this paper,
And look you lay it in the prætor's chair,
Where Brutus may best find it ; and throw this
In at his window ; set this up with wax
Upon old Brutus' statue : all this done,
Repair to Pompey's porch, where you shall find us.
Is Decius Brutus and Trebonius there ?

Cin. All but Metellus Cimber ; and he's gone

"was set up an image of Pompey, which the city had made and consecrated in honour of him." There it was, in fact, that the stabbing took place, though Shakespeare transfers this to the Capitol.

³² Is *featured*, has the same *aspect* or *countenance*. Shakespeare often uses *favour* in this sense. In the Poet's time, it was much in fashion to use *element* for *sky*. See vol. v. page 138, note 5.

³³ Close is *secret* or *in concealment*. A frequent usage.

³⁴ Incorporate is *closely united*, like the several parts of the body.

To seek you at your house. Well, I will hie,
And so bestow these papers as you bade me.

Cass. That done, repair to Pompey's theatre.—

[*Exit* CINNA.]

Come, Casca, you and I will yet, ere day,
See Brutus at his house: three parts of him
Is³⁵ ours already; and the man entire,
Upon the next encounter, yields him ours.

Casca. O, he sits high in all the people's hearts:
And that which would appear offence in us,
His countenance, like richest alchemy,³⁶
Will change to virtue and to worthiness

Cass. Him, and his worth, and our great need of him,
You have right well conceited.³⁷ Let us go,
For it is after midnight; and, ere day,
We will awake him, and be sure of him.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Rome. BRUTUS's Orchard.*¹

Enter BRUTUS.

Bru. What, Lucius, ho!—
I cannot, by the progress of the stars,
Give guess how near to day.—Lucius, I say!—
I would it were my fault to sleep so soundly.—
When, Lucius, when!² awake, I say! what, Lucius!

³⁵ Such combinations as *parts* and *is* were not then bad grammar.

³⁶ Alchemy is the old *ideal* art of turning base metals into gold.

³⁷ *Conceited* is *conceived, understood, or apprehended.*

¹ *Orchard* and *garden* were synonymous. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Capulet's *garden* is twice called *orchard*.

² *When!* was sometimes used as an exclamation of impatience.

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Call'd you, my lord?

Bru. Get me a taper in my study, Lucius :
When it is lighted, come and call me here.

Luc. I will, my lord.

[*Exit.*]

Bru. It must be by his death :³ and, for my part,
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
But for the general.⁴ He would be crown'd :
How that might change his nature, there's the question :
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder ;⁵
And that craves wary walking. Crown him? — that :
And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,
That at his will he may do danger with.⁶
Th' abuse of greatness is, when it disjoins
Remorse from power ; and, to speak truth of Cæsar,
I have not known when his affections sway'd
More than his reason.⁷ But 'tis a common proof,⁸

³ Brutus has been casting about on all sides to find some other means to prevent Cæsar's being king, and here gives it up that this can be done only by killing him. Thus the speech opens in just the right way to throw us back upon his antecedent meditations.

⁴ The *public cause*. This use of *general* was common.

⁵ The Poet is apt to be right in his observation of Nature. In a bright warm day the snakes come out to bask in the sun. And the idea is, that the sunshine of royalty will kindle the serpent in Cæsar.

⁶ That is, do *mischief* with, and so *be or prove dangerous*.

⁷ Some obscurity here, owing to the use of certain words in uncommon senses. *Remorse*, in Shakespeare, commonly means *pity* or *compassion* : here it means *conscience*, or *conscientiousness*. So in *Othello*, iii. 3: "Let him command, and to obey shall be in me *remorse*, what bloody work soe'er." The possession of dictatorial power is apt to stifle or sear the conscience, so as to make a man literally remorseless. *Affections*, again, here stands for *passions*, as in several other instances. Finally, *reason* is here used in the same sense as *remorse*. So the context clearly points out; and the conscience is, in a philosophical sense, the *moral* reason.

⁸ *Proof for fact*, or the thing *proved*. The Poet has it repeatedly so. See vol. xi. page 240, note 5.

That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
 Whereto the climber-upward turns his face ;
 But, when he once attains the upmost round,
 He then unto the ladder turns his back,
 Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees⁹
 By which he did ascend : so Cæsar may ;
 Then, lest he may, prevent. And, since the quarrel¹⁰
 Will bear no colour for the thing he is,
 Fashion it thus ; that what he is, augmented,
 Would run to these and these extremities :¹¹
 And therefore think him as a serpent's egg,
 Which, hatch'd, would, as his kind, grow mischievous ;
 And kill him in the shell.

Re-enter LUCIUS.

Luc. The taper burneth in your closet, sir.
 Seaching the window for a flint, I found [*Giving him a paper.*
 This paper thus seal'd up ; and I am sure
 It did not lie there when I went to bed.

Bru. Get you to bed again ; it is not day.
 Is not to-morrow, boy, the Ides of March ?

⁹ *Base degrees* is *lower steps* ; *degree* being used in its primitive sense, and for the rounds of the ladder. See vol. x. page 204, note 17.

¹⁰ *Quarrel for cause.* So in the 35th Psalm of *The Psalter* : "Stand up to judge my *quarrel* ; avenge Thou my *cause*."

¹¹ Something of obscurity again. But the meaning is, "Since we have no *show* or *pretext* of a cause, no assignable or apparent ground of complaint, against Cæsar, in what he is, or in any thing he has yet done, let us assume that the further addition of a crown will quite upset his nature, and metamorphose him into a serpent." The strain of casuistry used in this speech is very remarkable. Coleridge found it perplexing. Upon the supposal that Shakespeare meant Brutus for a wise and good man, the speech seems to me utterly unintelligible. But the Poet, I think, must have regarded him simply as a well-meaning, but conceited and shallow idealist ; and such men are always cheating and puffing themselves with the thinnest of sophisms ; feeding on air, and conceiving themselves inspired ; or " mistaking the giddiness of the head for the illumination of the Spirit."

Luc. I know not, sir.

Bru. Look in the calendar, and bring me word.

Luc. I will, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Bru. The exhalations,¹² whizzing in the air,
Give so much light, that I may read by them.

[*Opens the paper and reads.*]

Brutus, thou sleep'st: awake, and see thyself.

Shall Rome, &c. *Speak, strike, redress! —*

Brutus, thou sleep'st: awake! —

Such instigations have been often dropp'd

Where I have took them up.¹³

Shall Rome, &c. Thus must I piece it out:

Shall Rome stand under one man's awe? What, Rome?

My ancestor did from the streets of Rome

The Tarquin drive, when he was call'd a king.

Speak, strike, redress! — Am I entreated, then,

To speak and strike? O Rome, I make thee promise,

If the redress will follow, thou receivest

Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus!

Re-enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Sir, March is wasted fourteen days. [*Knocking within.*]

¹² *Exhalations* for *meteors*, or *metoric lights*; referring to the flashes of lightning. In Plutarch's *Opinions of Philosophers*, as translated by Holland, we have the following: "Aristotle supposeth that all these *meteors* come of a dry *exhalation*, which, being gotten enclosed within a moist cloud, striveth forcibly to get forth: now, by attrition and breaking together, it causeth the clap of thunder." Shakespeare has *meteor* repeatedly in the same way. See vol. x, page 64, notes 16 and 19.

¹³ Here the Poet had in his eye the following from Plutarch: "For Brutus, his friends and countrymen, both by divers procurements and sundry rumours of the city, and by many bills also, did openly call and procure him to do that he did. For, under the image of his ancestor Junius Brutus, that drove the kings out of Rome, they wrote, 'O, that it pleased the gods thou wert now alive, Brutus!' and again, 'That thou wert here among us now!' His tribunal or chair, where he gave audience during the time he was *Prætor*, was full of such bills: 'Brutus, thou art asleep, and art not Brutus indeed!'"

Bru. 'Tis good. Go to the gate ; somebody knocks.—

[*Exit LUCIUS.*

Since Cassius first did whet me against Cæsar,
I have not slept.

Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion,¹⁴ all the interim is
Like a phantasma¹⁵ or a hideous dream :
The Genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council ;¹⁶ and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.¹⁷

Re-enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Sir, 'tis your brother Cassius at the door,

¹⁴ *Motion* for *impulse*, or the first budding of thought into purpose.

¹⁵ A *phantasma* is a *phantom*; something imagined or fancied; a vision of things that are not, as in a nightmare.

¹⁶ Commentators differ about *genius* here; some taking it for the *conscience*, others for the *anti-conscience*. Shakespeare uses *genius*, *spirit*, and *demon* as synonymous, and all three, apparently, both in a good sense and in a bad; as every man was supposed to have a good and a bad angel. So, in this play, we have "thy *evil spirit*"; in *The Tempest*, "our *worser genius*"; in *Troilus and Cressida*, "Some say the *genius* so cries *Come!* to him that instantly must die"; in *Antony and Cleopatra*, "Thy *demon*, that thy *spirit* which keeps thee"; where, as often, *keeps* is *guards*. In these and some other cases, the words have some epithet or context that determines their meaning; but not so with *genius* in the text. But, in all such cases, the words, I think, mean the *directive* power of the mind. And so we often speak of a man's *better self*, or a man's *worser self*, according as one is in fact *directed* or *drawn* to good or to evil.—The sense of *mortal*, here, is also somewhat in question. The Poet sometimes uses it for *perishable*, or that which *dies*; but oftener for *deadly*, or that which *kills*. *Mortal instruments* may well be held to mean the same as when Macbeth says, "I'm settled, and bend up each *corporal agent* to this terrible feat."—As Brutus is speaking with reference to his own case, he probably intends *genius* in a good sense; for the spiritual or immortal part of himself. If so, then he would naturally mean, by *mortal*, his perishable part, or his *ministerial* faculties, which shrink from executing what the *directive* power is urging them to.

¹⁷ That is, a *kind* of insurrection, or *something like* an insurrection.

Who doth desire to see you.

Bru. Is he alone?

Luc. No, sir, there are more with him.

Bru. Do you know them?

Luc. No, sir; their hats are pluck'd about their ears,
And half their faces buried in their cloaks,
That by no means I may discover them
By any mark of favour.

Bru. Let 'em enter.— [Exit LUCIUS.

They are the faction.— O conspiracy,
Shamest thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,
When evils are most free?¹⁸ O, then, by day
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none, conspiracy; *
Hide it in smiles and affability:
For if thou pass, thy native semblance on,¹⁹
Not Erebus itself were dim enough
To hide thee from prevention.²⁰

Enter CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS, CINNA, METELLUS CIMBER,
and TREBONIUS.

Cass. I think we are too bold upon your rest:
Good morrow, Brutus; do we trouble you?

Bru. I have been up this hour, awake all night.
Know I these men that come along with you?

Cass. Yes, every man of them; and no man here
But honours you; and every one doth wish
You had but that opinion of yourself

¹⁸ When *crimes* and *mischiefs*, or rather when evil and mischievous *men* are most free from the restraints of law, or of shame. So Hamlet speaks of night as the time "when Hell itself breathes out contagion to this world."

¹⁹ "Thy native semblance *being on*." Ablative absolute again.

²⁰ "To hide thee from *discovery*," which would lead to prevention.— Erebus was the darkest and gloomiest region of Hades. The meaning of the word is *darkness*.

Which every noble Roman bears of you.
This is Trebonius.

Bru. He is welcome hither.

Cass. This, Decius²¹ Brutus.

Bru. He is welcome too.

Cass. This, Casca ; this, Cinna ; and this, Metellus Cimber.

Bru. They are all welcome.—

What watchful cares do interpose themselves
Betwixt your eyes and night?

Cass. Shall I entreat a word?

[*BRUTUS and CASSIUS whisper.*

Dec. Here lies the East : doth not the day break here?

Casca. No.

Cin. O, pardon, sir, it doth ; and yon gray lines
That fret the clouds are messengers of day.

Casca. You shall confess that you are both deceived.

Here, as I point my sword, the Sun arises ;
Which is a great way growing on the South,
Weighing the youthful season of the year.²²
Some two months hence, up higher toward the North
He first presents his fire ; and the high East
Stands, as the Capitol, directly here.²³

Bru. Give me your hands all over, one by one.

²¹ Shakespeare found the name thus in Plutarch. In fact, however, it was *Decimus*, not *Decius*. The man is said to have been cousin to the other Brutus of the play. He had been one of Cæsar's ablest, most favoured, and most trusted lieutenants, and had particularly distinguished himself in his naval service at Venetia and Massilia. After the murder of Cæsar, he was found to be written down in his will as second heir.

²² That is, *verging* or *inclining towards* the South, *in accordance with* the early time of the year. *Weighing* is *considering*.

²³ "The *high East*" is the *perfect* East. So the Poet has "*high morning*" for morning *full-blown*.—This little side-talk on an indifferent theme is finely conceived, and serves the double purpose of showing that they are not listening, and of preventing suspicion, if any were listening to them.

Cass. And let us swear our resolution.

Bru. No, not an oath: if not the face of men,²⁴
The sufferance of our souls, the time's abuse,—
If these be motives weak, break off betimes,
And every man hence to his idle bed;
So let high-sighted tyranny range on,
Till each man drop by lottery.²⁵ But if these,
As I am sure they do, bear fire enough
To kindle cowards, and to steel with valour
The melting spirits of women; then, countrymen,
What²⁶ need we any spur but our own cause
To prick us to redress? what other bond
Than secret Romans, that have spoke the word,
And will not palter?²⁷ and what other oath
Than honesty to honesty engaged,²⁸
That this shall be, or we will fall for it?
Swear priests, and cowards, and men cautious,²⁹
Old feeble carriions,³⁰ and such suffering souls
That welcome wrongs; unto bad causes swear
Such creatures as men doubt: but do not stain

²⁴ Meaning, probably, the shame and self-reproach with which Romans must now *look each other in the face*, under the consciousness of having fallen away from the republican spirit of their forefathers.

²⁵ Brutus seems to have in mind the capriciousness of a high-looking and heaven-daring oriental tyranny, where men's lives hung upon the nod and whim of the tyrant, as on the hazards of a lottery.

²⁶ *What for why.* The Poet often has it so. And so in St. Mark, xiv. 63: "What need we any further witnesses?"

²⁷ To *palter* is to *equivocate*, to *shuffle*, as in making a promise with what is called "a mental reservation."

²⁸ *Engaged* is *pledged*, or *put in pawn*. A frequent usage.

²⁹ *Cautelous* is here used in the sense of *deceit* or *fraud*; though its original meaning is *wary*, *circumspect*, the same as *cautious*. The word is said to have caught a bad sense in passing through French hands. But, as the Clarendon edition notes, "the transition from caution to suspicion, and from suspicion to craft and deceit, is not very abrupt."

³⁰ *Carriions* for *carcasses*, or men as good as dead. Repeatedly so.

The even virtue ³¹ of our enterprise,
 Nor th' insuppressive mettle of our spirits,
 To think ³² that or our cause or our performance
 Did need an oath ; when every drop of blood
 That every Roman bears, and nobly bears,
 Is guilty of a several bastardy,
 If he do break the smallest particle
 Of any promise that hath pass'd from him.

Cass. But what of Cicero? shall we sound him?
 I think he will stand very strong with us.

Casca. Let us not leave him out.

Cin. No, by no means.

Met. O, let us have him ; for his silver hairs
 Will purchase us a good opinion,³³
 And buy men's voices to command our deeds :
 It shall be said, his judgment ruled our hands ;
 Our youths and wildness shall no whit appear,
 But all be buried in his gravity.

Bru. O, name him not ! let us not break with him ; ³⁴
 For he will never follow any thing
 That other men begin.

Cass. Then leave him out.

Casca. Indeed he is not fit.

Dec. Shall no man else be touch'd but only Cæsar?

³¹ Meaning the virtue that holds an equable and uniform tenour, always keeping the same high level.—*Insuppressive* for *insuppressible*; the active form with the passive sense. See vol. v. page 54, note 6.

³² *By thinking.* The infinitive used gerundively again.

³³ *Opinion* for *reputation* or *estimation*. Often so. Observe the thread of association in *silver, purchase, and buy.*

³⁴ Old language for "let us not break *the matter to him.*"—This bit of dialogue is very charming. Brutus knows full well that Cicero is not the man to play second fiddle to any of *them*; that if he have any thing to do with the enterprise it must be as the leader of it; and that is just what Brutus wants to be himself. Merivale thinks it a great honour to Cicero, that the conspirators did not venture to propose the matter to him.

Cass. Decius, well urged. — I think it is not meet, Mark Antony, so well-beloved of Cæsar, Should outlive Cæsar: we shall find of him³⁵ A shrewd contriver; and, you know, his means, If he improve them, may well stretch so far As to annoy us all: which to prevent, Let Antony and Cæsar fall together.

Bru. Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius, To cut the head off, and then hack the limbs, Like wrath in death, and envy³⁶ afterwards; For Antony is but a limb of Cæsar. Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius. We all stand up against the spirit of Cæsar; And in the spirit of men there is no blood: O, that we then could come by Cæsar's spirit, And not dismember Cæsar! But, alas, Cæsar must bleed for it! And, gentle friends, Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully; Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods, Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds: And let our hearts, as subtle masters do, Stir up their servants to an act of rage, And after seem to chide 'em.³⁷ This shall mark Our purpose necessary,³⁸ and not envious; Which so appearing to the common eyes,

³⁵ We should say "find in him." So in *The Merchant*, iii. 5: "Even such a husband hast thou of me as she is for a wife."

³⁶ Here, as commonly in Shakespeare, *envy* is *malice* or *hatred*. And so, a little after, *envious* is *malicious*. — Here, again, *to cut* and *to hack* are gerundial infinitives.

³⁷ So the King proceeds with Hubert in *King John*. And so men often proceed when they wish to have a thing done, and to shirk the responsibility; setting it on by dark hints and allusions, and then, after it is done, affecting to blame or to scold the doers of it.

³⁸ That is, "will mark our purpose as necessary," or the offspring of necessity. The indiscriminate use of *shall* and *will* is frequent.

We shall be call'd purgers,³⁹ not murderers.
 And, for Mark Antony, think not of him ;
 For he can do no more than Cæsar's arm
 When Cæsar's head is off.

Cass. Yet I do fear him ;
 For, in th' ingrafted love he bears to Cæsar,—

Bru. Alas, good Cassius, do not think of him :
 If he love Cæsar, all that he can do
 Is to himself, take thought and die for Cæsar :⁴⁰
 And that were much he should ; for he is given
 To sports, to wildness, and much company.

Treb. There is no fear in him ;⁴¹ let him not die ;
 For he will live, and laugh at this hereafter. [Clock strikes.]

Bru. Peace ! count the clock.

Cass. The clock hath stricken three.

Treb. 'Tis time to part.

Cass. But it is doubtful yet,
 Whèr Cæsar will come forth to-day or no ;
 For he is superstitious grown of late,
 Quite from the main⁴² opinion he held once
 Of fantasy, of dreams, and ceremonies.⁴³

³⁹ Meaning *healers*, who cleanse the land from the disease of tyranny.

⁴⁰ "Think and die," or "take thought and die," is an old phrase for *grieve one's self to death* : and it would be much indeed, a very wonderful thing, if Antony should fall into any killing sorrow, such a light-hearted, jolly companion as he is. So the Poet uses *think* and *thought* repeatedly. See vol. v. page 178, note 12.

⁴¹ No fear on account of him, or because of him, is the meaning. So *in* is used in several other places.

⁴² *Great, strong, mighty* are among the old senses of *main*. And *from*, in Shakespeare, often has the force of *contrary to*. So in Hamlet's saying, "is from the purpose of playing."

⁴³ Cæsar was, in his philosophy, an Epicurean, as most of the educated Romans then also were. Hence he was, in opinion, strongly sceptical about dreams and ceremonial auguries. Nevertheless, as is apt to be the case with sceptics and freethinkers, his conduct, especially in his later years, was marked with many gross instances of superstitious practice.

It may be, these apparent⁴⁴ prodigies,
 The unaccustom'd terror of this night,
 And the persuasion of his augurers,
 May hold him from the Capitol to-day.

Dec. Never fear that : if he be so resolved,
 I can o'ersway him ; for he loves to hear
 That unicorns may be betray'd with trees,
 And bears with glasses, elephants with holes,
 Lions with toils,⁴⁵ and men with flatterers :
 But, when I tell him he hates flatterers,
 He says he does, being then most flatteréd.
 Let me work ;
 For I can give his humour the true bent,
 And I will bring him to the Capitol.

Cass. Nay, we will all of us be there to fetch him.

Bru. By the eighth hour : is that the uttermost ?

Cin. Be that the uttermost ; and fail not then.

Met. Caius Ligarius doth bear Cæsar hard,
 Who rated him for speaking well of Pompey :
 I wonder none of you have thought of him.

Bru. Now, good Metellus, go along by him :⁴⁶
 He loves me well, and I have given him reason ;⁴⁷
 Send him but hither, and I'll fashion him.

⁴⁴ *Apparent*, here, is *evident* or *manifest*. A frequent usage. See vol. x.
 page 75, note 13.

⁴⁵ The way to catch that fabulous old beast, the unicorn, is, to stand before a tree, and, when he runs at you, to slip aside, and let him stick his horn into the tree : then you have him. See *The Faerie Queene*, ii. 5, 10.—Bears are said to have been caught by putting looking-glasses in their way ; they being so taken with the images of themselves, that the hunters could easily master them.—Elephants were beguiled into pitfalls, lightly covered over with hurdles and turf ; a bait being placed thereon, to tempt them.—*Toil* is *trap* or *snares*. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, v. 2 : "As she would catch another Antony in her strong *toil* of grace."

⁴⁶ That is, by his house : "make that your way home."

⁴⁷ The meaning probably is, "given him reason to love me."

Cass. The morning comes upon's : we'll leave you, Brutus :—

And, friends, disperse yourselves ; but all remember
What you have said, and show yourselves true Romans.

Bru. Good gentlemen, look fresh and merrily ;
Let not our looks put on our purposes ;⁴⁸
But bear it as our Roman actors do,
With untired spirits and formal constancy :
And so, good morrow to you every one.—

[*Exeunt all but BRUTUS.*]

Boy ! Lucius ! Fast asleep ? It is no matter ;
Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber :⁴⁹
Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies,
Which busy care draws in the brains of men ;
Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.

Enter PORTIA.

Por.

Brutus, my lord !

Bru. Portia, what mean you ? wherefore rise you now ?
It is not for your health thus to commit
Your weak condition to the raw-cold morning.

Por. Nor for yours neither. You've ungently, Brutus,
Stole from my bed : and yesternight, at supper,
You suddenly arose, and walk'd about,
Musing and sighing, with your arms across ;
And, when I ask'd you what the matter was,
You stared upon me with ungentle looks :

⁴⁸ " Let not our looks betray our purposes by wearing, or being attired with, any indication of them."

⁴⁹ The compound epithet *honey-heavy* is very expressive and apt. The "dew of slumber" is called *heavy* because it makes the subject feel heavy, and *honey-heavy* because the heaviness it induces is sweet.—Brutus is naturally led to contrast the free and easy state of the boy's mind with that of his own, which the excitement of his present undertaking is drawing full of visions and images of trouble.

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Por. "—No, my Brutus;
You have some sick offence within your mind,
Which, by the right and virtue of my place,
I ought to know of."

I urged you further ; then you scratch'd your head,
And too impatiently stamp'd with your foot :
Yet I insisted, yet you answer'd not ;
But, with an angry wafture of your hand,
Gave sign for me to leave you. So I did ;
Fearing to strengthen that impatience
Which seem'd too much enkindled ; and withal
Hoping it was but an effect of humour,
Which sometime hath his hour with every man.
It will not let you eat, nor talk, nor sleep ;
And, could it work so much upon your shape,
As it hath much prevail'd on your condition,⁵⁰
I should not know you, Brutus. Dear my lord,
Make me acquainted with your cause of grief.

Bru. I am not well in health, and that is all.

Por. Brutus is wise, and, were he not in health,
He would embrace the means to come by it.

Bru. Why, so I do. Good Portia, go to bed.

Por. Is Brutus sick ? and is it physical⁵¹
To walk unbracèd, and suck up the humours
Of the dank morning ? What, is Brutus sick,
And will he steal out of his wholesome bed,
To dare the vile contagion of the night,
And tempt the rheumy⁵² and unpurgèd air
To add unto his sickness ? No, my Brutus ;

⁵⁰ *Condition* was much used for *temper* or *disposition*. The term *ill-conditioned* is still in use for a cross-grained, irascible, or quarrelsome disposition, or an ugly temper.

⁵¹ The Poet has *physical* again for *wholesome* or *medicinal*, in *Coriolanus*, i. 5 : "The blood I drop is rather *physical* than dangerous to me."

⁵² *Rheum* was specially used of the fluids that issue from the eyes or mouth. So in *Hamlet* we have "bisson *rheum*" for blinding tears. *Rheumy* here means that state of the air which causes the unhealthy issue of such fluids, or perhaps which makes people *rheumatic*. So, in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, ii. x, Titania speaks of the Moon as "washing all the air, that rheumatic diseases do abound."

You have some sick offence within your mind,
Which, by the right and virtue of my place,
I ought to know of: and, upon my knees,
I charge you, by my once-commended beauty,
By all your vows of love, and that great vow
Which did incorporate and make us one,
That you unfold to me, yourself, your half,
Why you are heavy, and what men to-night
Have had resort to you; for here have been
Some six or seven, who did hide their faces
Even from darkness.

Bru. Kneel not, gentle Portia.

Por. I should not need, if you were gentle Brutus.
Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
Is it excepted I should know no secrets
That appertain to you? Am I yourself
But, as it were, in sort or limitation,—
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs
Of your good pleasure?⁵³ If it be no more,
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.

Bru. You are my true and honourable wife;
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
That visit my sad heart.⁵⁴

Por. If this were true, then should I know this secret.
I grant I am a woman; but withal
A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife:
I grant I am a woman; but withal

⁵³ In the outskirts or borders, and not at the centre or near the heart. The image is exceeding apposite and expressive.

⁵⁴ This embodies what was then known touching the circulation of the blood. William Harvey was born in 1578, fourteen years after Shakespeare, and his discovery was not published till 1628, twelve years after the Poet's death. The general fact of the circulation was known in ancient times.

A woman well-reputed, Cato's daughter.
Think you I am no stronger than my sex,
Being so father'd and so husbanded?
Tell me your counsels ; I will not disclose 'em.
I have made strong proof of my constancy,
Giving myself a voluntary wound
Here, in the thigh : can I bear that with patience,
And not my husband's secrets?

Bru. O ye gods,
Render me worthy of this noble wife ! — [Knocking within.
Hark, hark ! one knocks : Portia, go in awhile ;
And by-and-by thy bosom shall partake
The secrets of my heart :
All my engagements I will construe to thee,
All the charáctery of my sad brows :⁵⁵
Leave me with haste. [Exit PORTIA.] — Lucius, who's that
knocks ?

Re-enter LUCIUS with LIGARIUS.

Luc. Here is a sick man that would speak with you.
Bru. Caius Ligarius, that Metellus spake of. —
Boy, stand aside. — Caius Ligarius, — how !
Lig. Vouchsafe good-morrow from a feeble tongue.
Bru. O, what a time have you chose out, brave Caius,
To wear a kerchief !⁵⁶ Would you were not sick !
Lig. I am not sick, if Brutus have in hand
Any exploit worthy the name of honour.
Bru. Such an exploit have I in hand, Ligarius,

⁵⁵ *Chardctery* is defined "writing by characters or strange marks." Brutus therefore means that he will divulge to her the secret cause of the sadness marked on his countenance.

⁵⁶ It was a common practice in England for those who were sick to wear a kerchief on their heads. So in Fuller's *Worthies of Cheshire* : "If any there be sick, they make him a posset and tye a kerchief on his head; and if that will not mend him, then God be merciful to him."

Had you a healthful ear to hear of it.

Lig. By all the gods that Romans bow before,
I here discard my sickness ! Soul of Rome !
Brave son, derived from honourable loins !
Thou, like an exorcist,⁵⁷ hast conjured up
My mortifièd spirit.⁵⁸ Now bid me run,
And I will strive with things impossible ;
Yea, get the better of them. What's to do ?

Bru. A piece of work that will make sick men whole.

Lig. But are not some whole that we must make sick ?

Bru. That must we also. What it is, my Caius,
I shall unfold to thee, as we are going,
To whom it must be done.

Lig. Set on your foot ;
And, with a heart new-fired, I follow you,
To do I know not what : but it sufficeth
That Brutus leads me on.

Bru. Follow me, then. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The Same. A Hall in Cæsar's Palace.*

Thunder and lightning. Enter CÆSAR, in his nightgown.

Cæs. Nor Heaven nor Earth have been at peace to-night :
Thrice hath Calpurnia in her sleep cried out,
Help, ho ! they murder Cæsar ! — Who's within ?

Enter a Servant.

Serv. My lord ?

Cæs. Go bid the priests do present sacrifice,

⁵⁷ In Shakespeare's time, *exorcist* and *conjurer* were used indifferently. The former has since come to mean only one who drives away spirits; the latter, one who calls them up.

⁵⁸ That is, "my spirit which was dead in me." Such is the literal meaning of *mortified*; and so the Poet has it repeatedly.

And bring me their opinions of success.¹

Serv. I will, my lord.

[*Exit.*]

Enter CALPURNIA.

Cal. What mean you, Cæsar? think you to walk forth?
You shall not stir out of your house to-day.

Cæs. Cæsar shall forth: the things that threaten me
Ne'er look'd but on my back; when they shall see
The face of Cæsar, they are vanish'd.

Cal. Cæsar, I never stood on ceremonies,²
Yet now they fright me. There is one within,
Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.
A lioness hath whelp'd in the streets;
And graves have yawn'd, and yielded up their dead;
Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds,
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol;
The noise of battle hurtled³ in the air;
Horses did neigh, and dying men did groan;
And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.
O Cæsar, these things are beyond all use,
And I do fear them!

Cæs. What can be avoided
Whose end is purposed by the mighty gods?
Yet Cæsar shall go forth; for these predictions
Are to the world in general as to Cæsar.

Cal. When beggars die, there are no comets seen;
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

¹ Their opinions of what is to follow. The Poet often uses *success* in this sense. See vol. ix. page 255, note 26.

² *Ceremonies* is here put for the ceremonial or sacerdotal interpretation of prodigies and omens.

³ To *hurtle* is to clash, or move with violence and noise.

Cæs. Cowards die many times before their deaths ;
The valiant never taste of death but once.⁴
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear ;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.—

Re-enter Servant.

What say the augurers ?

Serv. They would not have you to stir forth to-day.
Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,
They could not find a heart within the beast.

Cæs. The gods do this in shame of cowardice :
Cæsar should be a beast without a heart,
If he should stay at home to-day for fear.
No, Cæsar shall not : danger knows full well
That Cæsar is more dangerous than he :
We are two lions litter'd in one day,
And I the elder and more terrible ;
And Cæsar shall go forth.

Cal. Alas, my lord,
Your wisdom is consumed in confidence !
Do not go forth to-day : call it my fear
That keeps you in the house, and not your own.
We'll send Mark Antony to the Senate-house ;
And he shall say you are not well to-day :
Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this.

⁴ Plutarch relates that, a short time before Cæsar fell, some of his friends urged him to have a guard about him, and he replied that it was better to die at once than live in the continual fear of death. He is also said to have given as his reason for refusing a guard, that he thought Rome had more need of him than he of Rome; which was indeed true. And it is further stated that, on the eve of the fatal day, Cæsar being at the house of Lepidus with some friends, and the question being raised, "What kind of death is best?" he cut short the discussion by saying, "That which is least expected."

Cæs. Mark Antony shall say I am not well ;
And, for thy humour, I will stay at home.

Enter DECIUS.

Here's Decius Brutus, he shall tell them so.

Dec. Cæsar, all hail ! good morrow, worthy Cæsar :
I come to fetch you to the Senate-house.

Cæs. And you are come in very happy time,
To bear my greeting to the Senators,
And tell them that I will not come to-day.
Cannot, is false ; and that I dare not, falser :
I will not come to-day. Tell them so, Decius.

Cal. Say he is sick.

Cæs. Shall Cæsar send a lie ?
Have I in conquest stretch'd mine arm so far,
To be afeard to tell graybeards the truth ? —
Decius, go tell them Cæsar will not come.

Dec. Most mighty Cæsar, let me know some cause,
Lest I be laugh'd at when I tell them so.

Cæs. The cause is in my will ; I will not come :
That is enough to satisfy the Senate.
But, for your private satisfaction,
Because I love you, I will let you know :
Calpurnia here, my wife, stays me at home :
She dreamt to-night she saw my statua,⁵
Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,
Did run pure blood ; and many lusty Romans
Came smiling, and did bathe their hands in it :
And these does she apply for warnings and porténts

⁵ In Shakespeare's time *statue* was pronounced indifferently as a word of two syllables or three. Bacon uses it repeatedly as a trisyllable, and spells it *statua*, as in his *Advancement of Learning* : " It is not possible to have the true pictures or *statuas* of Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar, no, nor of the kings or great personages of much later years."

Of evils imminent ; and on her knee
Hath begg'd that I will stay at home to-day.

Dec. This dream is all amiss interpreted :
It was a vision fair and fortunate.

Your statue spouting blood in many pipes,
In which so many smiling Romans bathed,
Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck
Reviving blood ; and that great men shall press
For tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance.⁶
This by Calpurnia's dream is signified.

Cæs. And this way have you well expounded it.

Dec. I have, when you have heard what I can say ;
And know it now : The Senate have concluded
To give, this day, a crown to mighty Cæsar.⁷
If you shall send them word you will not come,
Their minds may change. Besides, it were a mock
Apt to be render'd,⁸ for some one to say,
Break up the Senate till another time,
When Cæsar's wife shall meet with better dreams.
If Cæsar hide himself, shall they not whisper,
Lo, Cæsar is afraid ?
Pardon me, Cæsar ; for my dear dear love

⁶ *Cognizance* is here used in a heraldic sense, as meaning any badge or token to show whose friends or servants the owners or wearers were. In ancient times, when martyrs or other distinguished men were executed, their friends often *pressed* to stain handkerchiefs with their blood, or to get some other relic, which they might keep, either as precious memorials of them, or as having a kind of sacramental virtue.

⁷ The Roman people were specially yearning to avenge the slaughter of Marcus Crassus and his army by the Parthians ; and Cæsar was at this time preparing an expedition against them. But a Sibylline oracle was alleged, that Parthia could only be conquered by a king ; and it was proposed to invest Cæsar with the royal title and authority over the foreign subjects of the State.

⁸ It were apt, or likely, to be *construed* or *represented* as a piece of mockery. So the Poet repeatedly uses the verb to *render*.

To your proceeding bids me tell you this ;
And reason to my love is liable.⁹

Cæs. How foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia !
I am ashamed I did yield to them.
Give me my robe, for I will go :

Enter PUBLIUS, BRUTUS, LIGARIUS, METELLUS, CASCA, TREBONIUS, and CINNA.

And look where Publius¹⁰ is come to fetch me.

Pub. Good morrow, Cæsar.

Cæs. Welcome, Publius.—
What, Brutus, are you stirr'd so early too ?—
Good morrow, Casca.—Caius Ligarius,
Cæsar was ne'er so much your enemy
As that sameague which hath made you lean.¹¹—
What is't o'clock ?

Bru. Cæsar, 'tis strucken eight.

Cæs. I thank you for your pains and courtesy.—

Enter ANTONY.

See ! Antony, that revels long o' nights,
Is notwithstanding up.—Good morrow, Antony.

Ant. So to most noble Cæsar.

Cæs. Bid them prepare within :
I am to blame to be thus waited for.—
Now, Cinna ;—now, Metellus ;—what, Trebonius !
I have an hour's talk in store for you :

⁹ The thought here is, that love stands as principal, reason as second or subordinate. "The deference which reason holds due from me to you is in this instance *subject* and *amenable* to the calls of personal affection."

¹⁰ This was Publius Silcius ; not one of the conspirators.

¹¹ Here, for the first time, we have Cæsar speaking fairly in character ; for he was probably the most finished gentleman of his time, one of the sweetest of men, and as full of kindness as of wisdom and courage. Merivale aptly styles him "Cæsar the politic and the merciful."

Remember that you call on me to-day ;
Be near me, that I may remember you.

Treb. Cæsar, I will ; — [*Aside.*] and so near will I be,
That your best friends shall wish I had been further.

Cæs. Good friends, go in, and taste some wine with me ;
And we, like friends, will straightway go together.

Bru. [*Aside.*] That every like is not the same, O Cæsar,
The heart of Brutus yearns to think upon !¹² [Exeunt.

SCENE III.—*The Same. A Street near the Capitol.*

Enter ARTEMIDORUS, reading a paper.

Artem. *Cæsar, beware of Brutus; take heed of Cassius; come not near Casca; have an eye to Cinna; trust not Trebonius; mark well Metellus Cimber; Decius Brutus loves thee not; thou hast wronged Caius Ligarius. There is but one mind in all these men, and it is bent against Cæsar. If thou be'st not immortal, look about you: security gives way to conspiracy.*¹ *The mighty gods defend thee!*

Thy lover, ARTEMIDORUS.

Here will I stand till Cæsar pass along,
And as a suitor will I give him this.
My heart laments that virtue cannot live
Out of the teeth of emulation.² —

¹² The winning and *honest* suavity of Cæsar here starts a pang of remorse in Brutus. Drinking wine together was regarded as a sacred pledge of truth and honour. Brutus knows that Cæsar is doing it in good faith; and it hurts him to think that the others *seem* to be doing the *like*, and yet are doing a very different thing. To *yearn* is to *grieve*, to *be pained*. Repeatedly used so by the Poet. See vol. xii. page 39, note 2.

¹ *Negligence* or *over-confidence* makes or *opens* a way for conspiracy. The use of *security* and *secure* in this sense is very frequent.

² *Emulation* is *factious* and *envious* *rivalry*. So in *Troilus and Cressida*, i. 3: "An *envious* fever of pale and bloodless *emulation*."

If thou read this, O Cæsar, thou mayst live ;
If not, the Fates with traitors do contrive.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Same. Another Part of the same Street, before the House of BRUTUS.*

Enter PORTIA and LUCIUS.

Por. I pr'ythee, boy, run to the Senate-house :
Stay not to answer me, but get thee gone.
Why dost thou stay ?

Luc. To know my errand, madam.

Por. I would have had thee there, and here again,
Ere I can tell thee what thou shouldest do there.—
[*Aside.*] O constancy, be strong upon my side !
Set a huge mountain 'tween my heart and tongue !
I have a man's mind, but a woman's might.
How hard it is for women to keep counsel !—
Art thou here yet ?

Luc. Madam, what should I do ?
Run to the Capitol, and nothing else ?
And so return to you, and nothing else ?

Por. Yes ; bring me word, boy, if thy lord look well,
For he went sickly forth : and take good note
What Cæsar doth, what suitors press to him.
Hark, boy ! what noise is that ?

Luc. I hear none, madam.

Por. Pr'ythee, listen well :
I heard a bustling rumour,³ like a fray,
And the wind brings it from the Capitol.

³ A *loud noise* or *murmur*, as of stir and tumult, is one of the old meanings of *rumour*.—Since the interview of Brutus and Portia, he has unbosomed all his secrets to her ; and now she is in such a fever of anxiety, that she mistakes her fancies for facts.

Luc. Sooth,⁴ madam, I hear nothing.

Enter ARTEMIDORUS.

Por. Come hither, fellow : which way hast thou been ?

Artem. At mine own house, good lady.

Por. What is't o'clock ?

Artem. About the ninth hour, lady.

Por. Is Cæsar yet gone to the Capitol ?

Artem. Madam, not yet : I go to take my stand,
To see him pass on to the Capitol.

Por. Thou hast some suit to Cæsar, hast thou not ?

Artem. That I have, lady : if it will please Cæsar
To be so good to Cæsar as to hear me,
I shall beseech him to befriend himself.

Por. Why, know'st thou any harm's intended towards
him ?

Artem. None that I know will be, much that I fear may
chance.

Good Morrow to you. — Here the street is narrow :
The throng that follows Cæsar at the heels,
Of Senators, of Praetors, common suitors,
Will crowd a feeble man almost to death :
I'll get me to a place more void, and there
Speak to great Cæsar as he comes along.

[*Exit.*]

Por. I must go in. — [*Aside.*] Ah me, how weak a thing
The heart of woman is ! — O Brutus,
The Heavens speed thee in thine enterprise ! —
Sure, the boy heard me. — Brutus hath a suit
That Cæsar will not grant.⁵ — O, I grow faint. —
Run, Lucius, and commend me to my lord ;

⁴ Sooth for *in sooth*; that is, *in truth*, or *truly*. A *soothsayer* is, properly, a *truth-speaker*. So the Poet often uses *sooth*.

⁵ These words Portia speaks aloud to Lucius, as a blind to cover the true cause of her uncontrollable flutter of spirits.

Say I am merry : come to me again,
And bring me word what he doth say to thee.

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Rome. Before the Capitol; the Senate sitting.*

A crowd of People in the street leading to the Capitol; among them ARTEMIDORUS and the Soothsayer. Flourish. Enter CÆSAR, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS, METELLUS, TREBONIUS, CINNA, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, POPILIUS, PUBLIUS, and others.

Cæs. The Ides of March are come.

Sooth. Ay, Cæsar ; but not gone.¹

Artem. Hail, Cæsar ! read this schedule.

Dec. Trebonius doth desire you to o'er-read,
At your best leisure, this his humble suit.

Artem. O Cæsar, read mine first ; for mine's a suit
That touches Cæsar nearer : read it, great Cæsar.

Cæs. What touches us ourself shall be last served.

Artem. Delay not, Cæsar ; read it instantly.²

¹ There was a certain soothsayer, that had given Cæsar warning long time afore, to take heed of the day of the Ides of March, which is the 15th of the month ; for on that day he should be in great danger. That day being come, Cæsar, going into the Senate-house, and speaking merrily unto the soothsayer, told him "the Ides of March be come,"—"So they be," softly answered the soothsayer, "but yet are they not past."—PLUTARCH.

² One Artemidorus also, born in the isle of Cnidos, a doctor of rhetoric in the Greek tongue, who by means of his profession was very familiar with certain of Brutus's confederates, and therefore knew the most part of all their practices against Cæsar, came and brought him a little bill, written with his own hand, of all that he meant to tell him. He, marking how Cæsar received all the supplications that were offered him, and that he

Cæs. What, is the fellow mad?

Pub. Sirrah, give place.

Cass. What, urge you your petitions in the street?
Come to the Capitol.³

CÆSAR enters the *Capitol*, *the rest following. All the Senators rise.*

Pop. I wish your enterprise to-day may thrive.

Cass. What enterprise, Popilius?

Pop. Fare you well.

[*Advances to CÆSAR.*

Bru. What said Popilius Lena?

Cass. He wish'd to-day our enterprise might thrive.
I fear our purpose is discoveréd.

Bru. Look, how he makes to Cæsar: mark him.

Cass. Casca, be sudden, for we fear prevention.—
Brutus, what shall be done? If this be known,
Cassius or Cæsar never shall turn back,⁴
For I will slay myself.

Bru. Cassius, be constant:
Popilius Lena speaks not of our purpose;
For, look, he smiles, and Cæsar doth not change.⁵

gave them straight to his men that were about him, pressed nearer to him, and said: "Cæsar, read this memorial to yourself, and that quickly, for they be matters of great weight, and touch you nearly." — PLUTARCH.

³ The murder of Cæsar did not, in fact, take place in the *Capitol*, but in a hall or *Curia* adjoining Pompey's theatre, where a statue of Pompey had been erected. The Senate had various places of meeting; generally in the *Capitol*, occasionally in some one of the Temples, at other times in one of the *Curiæ*, of which there were several in and about the city.

⁴ The meaning evidently is, "either Cassius or Cæsar shall never return alive; for, if I do not kill him, I will slay myself."

⁵ A senator called Popilius Lena, after he had saluted Brutus and Cassius more friendly than he was wont to do, he rounded softly in their ears, and told them, "I pray the gods you may go through with that you have taken in hand; but, withal, dispatch, I read you, for your enterprise is bewrayed." When he had said, he presently departed from them, and left

Cass. Trebonius knows his time ; for, look you, Brutus,
He draws Mark Antony out of the way.

[*Exeunt ANTONY and TREBONIUS.* CÆSAR and the
Senators take their seats.

Dec. Where is Metellus Cimber ? Let him go,
And presently prefer his suit to Cæsar.

Bru. He is address'd :⁶ press near and second him.

Cin. Casca, you are the first that rears your hand.

Casca. Are we all ready ?

Cæs. What is now amiss
That Cæsar and his Senate must redress ?

Met. Most high, most mighty, and most puissant Cæsar,
Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat

An humble heart, —

[*Kneeling.*

Cæs. I must prevent thee, Cimber.
These couchings⁷ and these lowly courtesies
Might fire the blood of ordinary men,
And turn pre-ordinance and first decree
Into the play of children.⁸ Be not fond,
To think⁹ that Cæsar bears such rebel blood

them both afraid that their conspiracy would out.— When Cæsar came out of the litter, Popilius Lena went unto him, and kept him a long time with talk. Cæsar gave good ear unto him ; wherefore the conspirators, not hearing what he said, but conjecturing that his talk was none other but the very discovery of their conspiracy, they were afraid every man of them ; and, one looking in another's face, it was easy to see that they all were of a mind that it was no tarrying for them till they were apprehended, but rather that they should kill themselves with their own hands.— PLUTARCH.

⁶ *Address'd* is *ready* or *prepared*. Often so. See vol. xii. page 78, note 1.

⁷ Among the proper senses of to *couch*, Richardson gives "to lower, to stoop, to bend down" ; and he says that "to *couch* and to *lower* have similar applications, and probably the same origin."

⁸ "Pre-ordinance and first decree" is, I take it, the ruling or enactment of the highest authority in the State. "The play of children" here referred to is, as soon as they have done a thing, to turn round and undo it, or to build a house of blocks or cobs for the mere fun of knocking it over.

⁹ "Be not so fond as to think," is the language in full. The Poet often

That will be thaw'd from the true quality
 With that which melteth fools ; I mean, sweet words,
 Low-crookèd curtsies, and base spaniel-fawning.
 Thy brother by decree is banishèd :
 If thou dost bend, and pray, and fawn for him,
 I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.

Met. Cæsar, thou dost me wrong.

Cæs. Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause,¹⁰
 Nor without cause will he be satisfied.

Met. Is there no voice more worthy than my own,
 To sound more sweetly in great Cæsar's ear
 For the repealing¹¹ of my banish'd brother ?

Bru. I kiss thy hand, but not in flattery, Cæsar ;
 Desiring thee that Publius Cimber may
 Have an immediate freedom of repeal.

Cæs. What, Brutus !

Cass. Pardon, Cæsar ; Cæsar, pardon :
 As low as to thy foot doth Cassius fall,
 To beg enfranchisement for Publius Cimber.

Cæs. I could be well moved, if I were as you ;
 If I could pray to move, prayers would move me :¹²
 But I am constant as the northern star,
 Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality
 There is no fellow in the firmament.

omits the adverbs in such cases. *Fond*, here, is *foolish* ; which was its ordinary sense in Shakespeare's time.

¹⁰ Metellus and Cæsar here use *wrong* in different senses. But to *hurt*, to *offend*, to *cause pain* were among its legitimate meanings in Shakespeare's time. So he has it afterwards in this play : " It shall advantage more than do us *wrong*." And so in several other places ; as in *Othello*, ii. 3 : " I persuade myself, to speak the truth shall nothing *wrong* him." To *wring* and to *wrest* are from the same root as *wrong*. See Critical Notes.

¹¹ To *repeal* from banishment is, in old English, to *recall* by repealing the sentence. See vol. x. page 176, note 7.

¹² " If I could seek to move others by prayers, then I were capable of being myself moved by the prayers of others."

The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks,
 They are all fire, and every one doth shine ;
 But there's but one in all doth hold his place :
 So in the world ; 'tis furnish'd well with men,
 And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive ;¹³
 Yet in the number I do know but one
 That unassailable holds on his rank,
 Unshaked of motion :¹⁴ and that I am he,
 Let me a little show it, even in this,
 That I was constant Cimber should be banish'd,
 And constant do remain to keep him so.¹⁵

Cin. O Cæsar,—

Cæs. Hence ! wilt thou lift up Olympus ?

Dec. Great Cæsar,—

Cæs. Doth not Brutus bootless kneel ?

Casca. Speak, hands, for me !

[CASCA stabs CÆSAR in the neck. CÆSAR catches hold of his arm. He is then stabbed by several other Conspirators, and last by MARCUS BRUTUS.

Cæs. Et tu, Brute ?¹⁶ — Then fall, Cæsar !¹⁷

[Dies. The Senators and People retire in confusion.

¹³ *Apprehensive* is intelligent, capable of apprehending.

¹⁴ "Unshaked of motion" is simply *unmoved*, or *not subject to motion*. Undisturbed by the motion of others. As all readers of the Bible know, *of* was continually used, with passive verbs, to denote the agent.

¹⁵ All through this scene, Cæsar is made to speak quite out of character, and in a strain of hateful arrogance, in order, apparently, to soften the enormity of his murder, and to grind the daggers of the assassins to a sharper point. Perhaps, also, it is a part of the irony which so marks this play, to put the haughtiest words in Cæsar's mouth just before his fall.

¹⁶ There is no classical authority for putting these words into the mouth of Cæsar ; and the English equivalent, *Thou too, Brutus*, sounds so much better, that it seems a pity the Poet did not write so. Cæsar had been as a father to Brutus, who was fifteen years his junior ; and the Greek, *Kai su teknon*, "You too, my son," which Dion and Suetonius put into his mouth, though probably unauthentic, is good enough to be true.

¹⁷ Then Cimber with both his hands plucked Cæsar's gown over his

Cin. Liberty ! Freedom ! Tyranny is dead !—
Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.

Cass. Some to the common pulpits, and cry out,
*Liberty, freedom, and enfranchisement!*¹⁸

Bru. People, and Senators, be not affrighted ;
Fly not ; stand still : ambition's debt is paid.

Casca. Go to the pulpit, Brutus.

Dec. And Cassius too.

Bru. Where's Publius ?

Cin. Here, quite confounded with this mutiny.

Met. Stand fast together, lest some friend of Cæsar's
Should chance —

Bru. Talk not of standing. — Publius, good cheer ;
There is no harm intended to your person,
Nor to no Roman else : so tell them, Publius.

Cass. And leave us, Publius ; lest that the people,
Rushing on us, should do your age some mischief.

Bru. Do so ; — and let no man abide¹⁹ this deed,
But we the doers.

shoulders, and Casca, that stood behind him, drew his dagger first and struck Cæsar upon the shoulder, but gave him no great wound. Cæsar, feeling himself hurt, took him straight by the hand he held his dagger in, and cried out in Latin : "O traitor Casca, what doest thou?" Casca on the other side cried in Greek, and called his brother to help him. So divers running on a heap together to fly upon Cæsar, he, looking about him to have fled, saw Brutus with a sword drawn in his hand ready to strike at him : then he let Casca's hand go, and, casting his gown over his face, suffered every man to strike at him that would. Then the conspirators thronging one upon another, because every man was desirous to have a cut at him, so many swords and daggers lighting upon one body, one of them hurt another, and among them Brutus caught a blow on his hand, because he would make one in murdering of him, and all the rest also were every man of them bloodied. — PLUTARCH.

¹⁸ This is somewhat in the style of Caliban, when he gets glorious with "celestial liquor," *The Tempest*, ii. 2: "Freedom, hey-day ! hey-day, freedom ! freedom, hey-day, freedom !"

¹⁹ To abide a thing is to be responsible for it, to bear the consequences.



Cin. "Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!—
Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets."

Julius Caesar. Act 3, Scene 1.

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Re-enter TREBONIUS.

Cass. Where's Antony?

Tre. Fled to his house amazed.

Men, wives, and children stare, cry out, and run
As it were doomsday.

Bru. Fates, we will know your pleasures :
That we shall die, we know ; 'tis but the time,
And drawing days out, that men stand upon.²⁰

Casca. Why, he that cuts off twenty years of life
Cuts off so many years of fearing death.

Bru. Grant that, and then is death a benefit :
So are we Cæsar's friends, that have abridged
His time of fearing death. — Stoop, Romans, stoop,
And let us bathe our hands in Cæsar's blood
Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords :
Then walk we forth, even to the market-place,
And, waving our red weapons o'er our heads,
Let's all cry, *Peace, freedom, and liberty !*

Cass. Stoop, then, and wash. How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted o'er
In States unborn and accents yet unknown !

Bru. How many times shall Cæsar bleed in sport,
That now on Pompey's basis lies along²¹
No worthier than the dust !

Cass. So oft as that shall be,
So often shall the knot of us be call'd
The men that gave their country liberty.²²

²⁰ " We all know that we are to die some time; and how long we can draw out our life, is the only thing we concern ourselves about."

²¹ So it was in fact: Cæsar fell at the pedestal of Pompey's statue; the statue itself dripping with the blood that spurted from him.

²² These three speeches, vain-gloriously anticipating the stage celebrity of the deed, are very strange; and, unless there be a shrewd irony lurking in them, I am at a loss to understand the purpose of them. Their effect on

Dec. What, shall we forth?

Cass. Ay, every man away :
Brutus shall lead ; and we will grace his heels
With the most boldest²³ and best hearts of Rome.

Bru. Soft ! who comes here ?

Enter a Servant.

A friend of Antony's.

Serv. Thus, Brutus, did my master bid me kneel ;
Thus did Mark Antony bid me fall down ;
And, being prostrate, thus he bade me say :
Brutus is noble, wise, valiant, and honest ;
Cæsar was mighty, bold, royal, and loving :
Say I love Brutus, and I honour him ;
Say I fear'd Cæsar, honour'd him, and loved him.
If Brutus will vouchsafe that Antony
May safely come to him, and be resolved²⁴
How Cæsar hath deserved to lie in death,
Mark Antony shall not love Cæsar dead
So well as Brutus living ; but will follow
The fortunes and affairs of noble Brutus
Thorough²⁵ the hazards of this untrod state
With all true faith. So says my master Antony.

Bru. Thy master is a wise and valiant Roman ;
I never thought him worse.
Tell him, so please him come unto this place,
He shall be satisfied ; and, by my honour,

my mind has long been to give a very ambitious air to the work of these patriots, and to cast a highly theatrical colour on their alleged virtue.

²³ This doubling of superlatives, as also of comparatives, and of negatives, was common in the Poet's time. So, in The Acts, xxvi. 5, St. Paul says, "after the *most straitest* sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."

²⁴ *Informed, assured, satisfied* are among the old senses of *resolved*.

²⁵ Shakespeare uses *through* or *thorough* indifferently, as suits his verse. The two are in fact but different forms of the same word.

Depart untouch'd.

Serv. I'll fetch him presently. [Exit.

Bru. I know that we shall have him well to friend.

Cass. I wish we may: but yet have I a mind
That fears him much; and my misgiving still
Falls shrewdly to the purpose.

Bru. But here comes Antony. —

Re-enter ANTONY.

Welcome, Mark Antony.

Ant. O mighty Cæsar! dost thou lie so low?
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,
Shrunk to this little measure? Fare thee well.—
I know not, gentlemen, what you intend,
Who else must be let blood, who else is rank:²⁶
If I myself, there is no hour so fit
As Cæsar's death-hour; nor no instrument
Of half that worth as those your swords, made rich
With the most noble blood of all this world.
I do beseech ye, if you bear me hard,
Now, whilst your purpled hands do reek and smoke,
Fulfil your pleasure. Live a thousand years,²⁷
I shall not find myself so apt to die:
No place will please me so, no mean of death,
As here by Cæsar, and by²⁸ you cut off,
The choice and master spirits of this age.

Bru. O Antony, beg not your death of us.
Though now we must appear bloody and cruel,

²⁶ "Must be let blood" is a mere euphemism for "must be put to death." — "Who else is rank" means "who else has too much blood in him." And the idea is of one who has *overtopped* his equals, and *grown too high* for the public safety. See vol. v. page 11, note 14.

²⁷ That is, "if I live," or "should I live, a thousand years."

²⁸ *By* is here used in two senses; first, in the sense of *near*, or as a sign of place; second, to denote agency, as usual.

As, by our hands and this our present act,
 You see we do ; yet see you but our hands,
 And this the bleeding business they have done :
 Our hearts you see not ; they are pitiful ;
 And pity to the general wrong of Rome —
 As fire drives out fire,²⁹ so pity pity —
 Hath done this deed on Cæsar. For your part,
 To you our swords have leaden points, Mark Antony :
 Our arms in strength of amity, and our hearts
 Of brothers' temper, do receive you in
 With all kind love, good thoughts, and reverence.

Cass. Your voice shall be as strong as any man's
 In the disposing of new dignities.³⁰

Bru. Only be patient till we have appeased
 The multitude, beside themselves with fear,
 And then we will deliver you the cause,
 Why I, that did love Cæsar when I struck him,
 Have thus proceeded.

Ant. I doubt not of your wisdom.
 Let each man render me his bloody hand :
 First, Marcus Brutus, will I shake with you ; —
 Next, Caius Cassius, do I take your hand ; —
 Now, Decius Brutus, yours ; — now yours, Metellus ; —

²⁹ Shakespeare uses *fire* as one or two syllables indifferently, to suit his metre. Here the first *fire* is two syllables, the second one. — The allusion is to the old way of salving a burn by holding it up to the fire. So in *Romeo and Juliet*, i. 2: "Tut, man, one fire burns out another's burning ; one pain is lessen'd by another's anguish."

³⁰ This little speech is snugly characteristic. Brutus has been talking about "our hearts," and "kind love, good thoughts, and reverence." To Cassius, all that is mere rose-water humbug, and he knows it is so to Antony too. He therefore hastens to put in such motives as he knows will have weight with Antony, as they also have with himself. And it is somewhat remarkable that several of these patriots, especially Cassius, the two Brutuses, and Trebonius, afterwards accepted the governorship of fat provinces for which they had been prospectively named by Cæsar.

Yours, Cinna ; — and, my valiant Casca, yours ; —
Though last, not least in love, yours, good Trebonius.
Gentlemen all, — alas, what shall I say ?
My credit now stands on such slippery ground,
That one of two bad ways you must conceit me,³¹
Either a coward or a flatterer. —
That I did love thee, Cæsar, O, 'tis true :
If, then, thy spirit look upon us now,
Shall it not grieve thee dearer³² than thy death,
To see thy Antony making his peace,
Shaking the bloody fingers of thy foes, —
Most noble ! — in the presence of thy corse ?
Had I as many eyes as thou hast wounds,
Weeping as fast as they stream forth thy blood,
It would become me better than to close
In terms of friendship with thine enemies.
Pardon me, Julius ! Here wast thou bay'd,³³ brave hart ;
Here didst thou fall ; and here thy hunters stand,
Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy death. —
O world, thou wast the forest to this hart ;
And this, indeed, O world, the heart of thee. —
How like a deer, stricken by many princes,
Dost thou here lie !

Cass. Mark Antony, —

Ant. Pardon me, Caius Cassius :
The enemies of Cæsar shall say this ;
Then, in a friend, it is cold modesty.³⁴

Cass. I blame you not for praising Cæsar so ;

³¹ Must conceive of me, or construe me. See page 34, note 37.

³² Formerly *dear* might signify whatever moved any strong feeling, whether of pleasure or pain. The Poet has many instances of it used as here. See vol. v. page 227, note 6.

³³ *Bay'd* is brought to bay, and so barked at and worried, as a deer by hounds. Shakespeare has the word often in that sense.

³⁴ *Modesty* in its original sense of *moderation*. Frequent.

But what compâct mean you to have with us?
 Will you be prick'd³⁵ in number of our friends ;
 Or shall we on, and not depend on you?

Ant. Therefore³⁶ I took your hands ; but was indeed
 Sway'd from the point, by looking down on Cæsar.
 Friends am I with you all, and love you all,
 Upon this hope, that you shall give me reasons
 Why and wherein Cæsar was dangerous.

Bru. Or else were this a savage spectacle :
 Our reasons are so full of good regard
 That, were you, Antony, the son of Cæsar,
 You should be satisfied.

Ant. That's all I seek :
 And am moreover suitor that I may
 Produce his body to the market-place ;³⁷
 And in the pulpit, as becomes a friend,
 Speak in the order of his funeral.

Bru. You shall, Mark Antony.

Cass. Brutus, a word with you.
 [Aside to BRU.] You know not what you do ; do not con-
 sent
 That Antony speak in his funeral :
 Know you how much the people may be moved
 By that which he will utter ?

Bru. [Aside to CASS.] By your pardon :
 I will myself into the pulpit first,
 And show the reason of our Cæsar's death :

³⁵ *Prick'd* is *marked*. The image is of a list of names written out, and some of them having holes pricked in the paper against them.

³⁶ *Therefore* is not the illative conjunction here ; but means *to that end*, or *for that purpose*.

³⁷ *Produce* in the Latin sense of *produco* ; implying motion to a place. — Here, and all through this play, *market-place* is the *Forum*, where several rostra were provided for addressing the people. Shakespeare calls these *rostra pulpits*.

What Antony shall speak, I will protest
He speaks by leave and by permission ;
And that we are contented Cæsar shall
Have all due rites and lawful ceremonies.
It shall advantage more than do us wrong.

Cass. [Aside to BRU.] I know not what may fall ; I like
it not.

Bru. Mark Antony, here, take you Cæsar's body.
You shall not in your funeral speech blame us,
But speak all good you can devise of Cæsar ;
And say you do't by our permission ;
Else shall you not have any hand at all
About his funeral : and you shall speak
In the same pulpit whereto I am going,
After my speech is ended.

Ant. Be it so ;
I do desire no more.

Bru. Prepare the body, then, and follow us.

[*Exeunt all but ANTONY.*

Ant. O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers !
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever livèd in the tide of times.
Woe to the hands that shed this costly blood !
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy,—
Which, like dumb mouths, do ope their ruby lips,
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue,—
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men ;³⁸
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy ;

³⁸ By *men* Antony means not mankind in general; the scope of the curse being limited by the subsequent words, "the parts of Italy," and "in these confines."—*Limbs* is merely the figure of speech called *Synecdoche*, or the putting of a part of a thing for the whole.

Blood and destruction shall be so in use,
 And dreadful objects so familiar,
 That mothers shall but smile when they behold
 Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war ;
 All pity choked³⁹ with custom of fell deeds :
 And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
 With Até⁴⁰ by his side come hot from Hell,
 Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice
 Cry *Havoc* ! and let slip the dogs of war ;⁴¹
 That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
 With carrion men, groaning for burial.—

Enter a Servant.

You serve Octavius Cæsar, do you not ?

Serv. I do, Mark Antony.

Ant. Cæsar did write for him to come to Rome.

Serv. He did receive his letters, and is coming ;
 And bid me say to you by word of mouth, —

[*Seeing the body.*] O Cæsar ! —

Ant. Thy heart is big, get thee apart and weep.
 Passion, I see, is catching ; for mine eyes,
 Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,
 Begin to water. Is thy master coming ?

Serv. He lies to-night within seven leagues of Rome.

³⁹ "All pity *being* choked." Ablative absolute again.

⁴⁰ Até is the old goddess of discord and mischief. So, in *Much Ado*, ii. 1, Benedick describes Beatrice as "the infernal Até in good apparel."

⁴¹ *Havoc* was anciently the word of signal for giving no quarter in a battle. It was a high crime for any one to give the signal without authority from the general-in-chief; hence the peculiar force of *monarch's voice*. — To *let slip* a dog was a term of the chase, for releasing the hounds from the leash or *slip* of leather whereby they were held in hand till it was time to let them pursue the animal. — The *dogs of war* are fire, sword, and famine. So in *King Henry V.*, first Chorus: "At his heels, *leash'd* in like *hounds*, should *famine, sword, and fire*, crouch for employment."

Ant. Post back with speed, and tell him what hath chanced.

Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome,
No Rome of safety for Octavius yet ;
Hie hence, and tell him so. Yet, stay awhile ;
Thou shalt not back till I have borne this corse
Into the market-place : there shall I try,
In my oration, how the people take
The cruel issue of these bloody men ;
According to the which, thou shalt discourse
To young Octavius of the state of things.
Lend me your hand. [*Exeunt with Cæsar's body.*

SCENE II.—*The Same. The Forum.*

Enter BRUTUS and CASSIUS, and a throng of Citizens.

Citizens. We will be satisfied ; let us be satisfied.

Bru. Then follow me, and give me audience, friends.—
Cassius, go you into the other street,
And part the numbers.—
Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here ;
Those that will follow Cassius, go with him ;
And public reasons shall be renderéd
Of Cæsar's death.

1 Cit. I will hear Brutus speak.

2 Cit. I will hear Cassius ; and compare their reasons,
When severally we hear them renderéd.

[*Exit* CASSIUS, with some of the Citizens. BRUTUS
goes into the rostrum.

3 Cit. The noble Brutus is ascended : silence !

Bru. Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers !¹ hear me for my cause ;

* ¹ *Lover* and *friend* were used as synonymous in the Poet's time. Brutus afterwards speaks of Cæsar as "my best *lover*."

and be silent, that you may hear : believe me for mine honour ; and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe : censure² me in your wisdom ; and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Cæsar's, to him I say, that Brutus' love to Cæsar was no less than his. If, then, that friend demand why Brutus rose against Cæsar, this is my answer, Not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Cæsar were living, and die all slaves, than that Cæsar were dead, to live all freemen? As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him ; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it ; as he was valiant, I honour him : but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love ; joy for his fortune ; honour for his valour ; and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak ; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak ; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak ; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

Citizens. None, Brutus, none.

Bru. Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Cæsar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enroll'd in the Capitol ;³ his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy ;⁴ nor his offences enforced, for which he suffered death. Here comes his body, mourned by Mark

Enter ANTONY and others, with CÆSAR'S body.

Antony ; who, though he had no hand in his death, shall re-

² *Censure* is here, as often, *judge* ; probably used for the jingle it makes with *senses*.

³ The *reason* of his death is made a matter of solemn official record in the books of the Senate, as showing that the act of killing him was done for public ends, and not from private hate.

⁴ His fame is not *lessened* or *whittled down* in those points wherein he was worthy.—*Enforced* is in antithesis to *extenuated*, meaning that his faults are not magnified or forced out of just measure. *

ceive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth ;
as which of you shall not ? With this I depart, That, as I
slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same
dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need
my death.⁵

Citizens. Live, Brutus ! live, live !

1 Cit. Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

2 Cit. Give him a statue with his ancestors.

3 Cit. Let him be Cæsar.

4 Cit. Cæsar's better parts

Shall now be crown'd in Brutus.

1 Cit. We'll bring him to his house with shouts and
clamours.

Bru. My countrymen,—

2 Cit. Peace ! silence ! Brutus speaks.

1 Cit. Peace, ho !

Bru. Good countrymen, let me depart alone,
And, for my sake, stay here with Antony :
Do grace to Cæsar's corpse, and grace his speech
Tending to Cæsar's glory ; which Mark Antony,
By our permission, is allow'd to make.
I do entreat you, not a man depart,
Save I alone, till Antony have spoke.

[*Exit.*]

1 Cit. Stay, ho ! and let us hear Mark Antony.

3 Cit. Let him go up into the public chair ;

⁵ In this celebrated speech, which, to my taste, is far from being a model of style either for oratory or any thing else, the Poet seems to have aimed at imitating the manner actually ascribed to Brutus. So, in Plutarch : "They do note that, in some of his Epistles, he counterfeited that briefe compendious manner of speech of the Lacedæmonians." And Shakespeare's idea, as followed out in this speech, is sustained also by the *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, ascribed to Tacitus ; wherein it is said that Brutus' style of eloquence was censured as *otiosum et disjunctum*. For, as Verplanck remarks, "the *disjunctum*, the broken-up style, without oratorical continuity, is precisely that assumed by the dramatist."

We'll hear him. — Noble Antony, go up.

Ant. For Brutus' sake, I am beholding⁶ to you. [*Goes up.*]

4 Cit. What does he say of Brutus?

3 Cit. He says, for Brutus' sake,
He finds himself beholding to us all.

4 Cit. 'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here.

1 Cit. This Cæsar was a tyrant.

3 Cit. Nay, that's certain :
We're bless'd that Rome is rid of him.

2 Cit. Peace ! let us hear what Antony can say.

Ant. You gentle Romans, —

Citizens. Peace, ho ! let us hear him.

Ant. Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears :
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.

The evil that men do lives after them ;
The good is oft interrèd with their bones :⁷
So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious :⁸
If it were so, it was a grievous fault ;
And grievously hath Cæsar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest, —
For Brutus is an honourable man ;
So are they all, all honourable men, —
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me :
But Brutus says he was ambitious ;
And Brutus is an honourable man.

⁶ Shakespeare always uses *beholding*, the active form, for *beholden*, the passive. Here, as elsewhere, it means *obliged*, of course.

⁷ We have the same thought in *Henry the Eighth*, iv. 2: " Men's evil manners live in brass ; their virtues we write in water."

⁸ In Shakespeare's time, the ending *-tious* and various others like it, was often pronounced as two syllables. The same was the case with *-tion*, *-sion*, and divers others. Many instances of the latter have already occurred in this play; as in the preceding scene : " And say you do't by our *permission*."

He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill :⁹
Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious ?
When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept :
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff :
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious ;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal¹⁰
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse : was this ambition ?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious ;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.¹¹
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am, to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, — not without cause :
What cause withholds you, then, to mourn¹² for him ? —
O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,¹³
And men have lost their reason ! — Bear with me ;
My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

x Cit. Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.

⁹ Cæsar's campaigns in Gaul put vast sums of money into his hands, a large part of which he kept to his own use, as he might have kept it all; but he did also, in fact, make over much of it to the *public treasury*. This was a very popular act, as it lightened the taxation of the city.

¹⁰ That is, on *the day* when the feast of Lupercalia was held.

¹¹ Of course these repetitions of *honourable man* are intensely ironical; and for that very reason the irony should be studiously kept out of the voice in pronouncing them. I have heard speakers and readers utterly spoil the effect of the speech by specially emphasizing the irony. For, from the extreme delicacy of his position, Antony is obliged to proceed with the utmost caution, until he gets the audience thoroughly in his power. The consummate adroitness which he uses to this end is one of the greatest charms of this incomparable oration.

¹² To *mourn* for *from mourning*. Another gerundial infinitive.

¹³ *Brutish* is by no means tautological here; the antithetic sense of *human* brutes being most artfully implied.

2 Cit. If thou consider rightly of the matter,
Cæsar has had great wrong.

3 Cit. Has he not, masters?
I fear there will a worse come in his place.

4 Cit. Mark'd ye his words? He would not take the
crown;

Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

1 Cit. If it be found so, some will dear abide it.¹⁴

2 Cit. Poor soul! his eyes are red as fire with weeping.

3 Cit. There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

4 Cit. Now mark him; he begins again to speak.

Ant. But yesterday the word of Cæsar might
Have stood against the world: now lies he there,

And none so poor to do him reverence.¹⁵

O masters, if I were disposed to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,

I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,

Who, you all know, are honourable men:

I will not do them wrong; I rather choose

To wrong the dead, to wrong myself, and you,

Than I will wrong such honourable men.

But here's a parchment with the seal of Cæsar,

I found it in his closet,—'tis his will:

Let but the commons hear this testament,—

Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read,—

And they would go and kiss dead Cæsar's wounds,

And dip their napkins¹⁶ in his sacred blood;

Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,

And, dying, mention it within their wills,

¹⁴ Here, again, to *abide* a thing is to *suffer for* it, or, as we now say, to *pay for* it. See page 64, note 19.

¹⁵ And there are none so humble but that he is beneath their reverence, or too low for their regard.

¹⁶ *Napkin* and *handkerchief* were used indifferently.

Bequeathing it, as a rich legacy,
Unto their issue.

4 Cit. We'll hear the will: read it, Mark Antony.

Citizens. The will, the will! we will hear Cæsar's will.

Ant. Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it;
It is not meet you know how Cæsar loved you.

You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;

And, being men, hearing the will of Cæsar,

It will inflame you, it will make you mad.

'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs;

For, if you should, O, what would come of it!

4 Cit. Read the will; we'll hear it, Antony;
You shall read us the will,—Cæsar's will.

Ant. Will you be patient? will you stay awhile?
I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it:
I fear I wrong the honourable men
Whose daggers have stabb'd Cæsar;¹⁷ I do fear it.

4 Cit. They were traitors: honourable men!

Citizens. The will! the testament!

2 Cit. They were villains, murderers: the will! read the will.

Ant. You will compel me, then, to read the will?
Then make a ring about the corpse of Cæsar,
And let me show you him that made the will.
Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?

Citizens. Come down.

2 Cit. Descend.

3 Cit. You shall have leave.

[ANTONY comes down.

4 Cit. A ring! stand round.

¹⁷ Antony now sees that he has the people wholly with him, so that he is perfectly safe in stabbing the stabbers with these terrible words.—"I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it" is, "I have gone too far, and hurt my own cause, *in telling* you of it." The infinitive used gerundively again. We have a like expression in *Henry the Eighth*, i. 1: "We may outrun, by violent swiftness, that which we run at, and lose by over-running."

1 Cit. Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.

2 Cit. Room for Antony ! most noble Antony !

Ant. Nay, press not so upon me ; stand far¹⁸ off.

Citizens. Stand back ; room ! bear back.

Ant. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

You all do know this mantle : I remember

The first time ever Cæsar put it on ;

'Twas on a Summer's evening, in his tent,

That day he overcame the Nervii.¹⁹

Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through :

See what a rent the envious²⁰ Casca made :

Through this the well-belovèd Brutus stabb'd ;

And, as he pluck'd his cursèd steel away,

Mark how the blood of Cæsar follow'd it,

As rushing out of doors, to be resolved²¹

If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no ;

For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel :²²

Judge, O you gods, how dearly Cæsar loved him !

This was the most unkindest cut of all ;

For, when the noble Cæsar saw him stab,

Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,

Quite vanquish'd him : then burst his mighty heart ;

¹⁸ The Poet has *far'* for *further* repeatedly. See vol. vii. page 229, note 51.

¹⁹ This is the artfullest and most telling stroke in Antony's speech. The Romans prided themselves most of all upon their military virtue and renown : Cæsar was their greatest military hero ; and his victory over the Nervii was his most noted military exploit. It occurred during his second campaign in Gaul, in the Summer of the year B.C. 57, and is narrated with surpassing vividness in the second book of his *Bellum Gallicum*. Of course the matter about the "mantle" is purely fictitious : Cæsar had on the civic gown, not the military cloak, when killed ; and it was, in fact, the mangled toga that Antony displayed on this occasion : but the fiction has the effect of making the allusion to the victory seem perfectly artless and incidental.

²⁰ *Envious*, again, in its old sense of *malicious* or *malignant*.

²¹ *Resolved*, again, for *informed* or *assured*. See page 66, note 24.

²² *Angel* here means, apparently, his counterpart, his good genius, or a kind of better and dearer self. See page 38, note 16.

And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's statua,
Which all the while ran blood,²³ great Cæsar fell.
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen !
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.
O, now you weep ; and, I perceive, you feel
The dint of pity :²⁴ these are gracious drops.
Kind souls, what, weep you when you but behold
Our Cæsar's vesture wounded ? Look you here,
Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

1 Cit. O piteous spectacle !

2 Cit. O noble Cæsar !

3 Cit. O woeful day !

4 Cit. O traitors, villains !

1 Cit. O most bloody sight !

2 Cit. We will be revenged.

Citizens. Revenge, — about, — seek, — burn, — fire, — kill,
— slay, — let not a traitor live !

Ant. Stay, countrymen.

1 Cit. Peace there ! hear the noble Antony.

2 Cit. We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with
him.

Ant. Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny.

They that have done this deed are honourable :
What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,

²³ Men report, that Cæsar did still defend himself against the rest, running every way with his body : but when he saw Brutus with his sword drawn in his hand, then he pulled his gown over his head, and made no more resistance, and was driven either casually or purposely, by the counsel of the conspirators, against the base whereupon Pompey's image stood, which ran all of a gore-blood till he was slain. — PLUTARCH.

²⁴ *Dint* is, properly, *blow* or *stroke* ; here put for the *impression* made by the blow.

That made them do it ; they are wise and honourable,
 And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.
 I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts :
 I am no orator, as Brutus is ;
 But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man,
 That love my friend ; and that they know full well
 That gave me public leave to speak of him :
 For I have neither wit,²⁵ nor words, nor worth,
 Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,
 To stir men's blood : I only speak right on ;
 I tell you that which you yourselves do know ;
 Show you sweet Cæsar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,
 And bid them speak for me : but were I Brutus,
 And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
 Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue
 In every wound of Cæsar, that should move
 The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

Citizens. We'll mutiny.

1 Cit. We'll burn the house of Brutus.

3 Cit. Away, then ! come, seek the conspirators.

Ant. Yet hear me, countrymen ; yet hear me speak.

Citizens. Peace, ho ! hear Antony, most noble Antony !

Ant. Why, friends, you go to do you know not what.

Wherein hath Cæsar thus deserved your loves ?

Alas, you know not ; I must tell you, then :

You have forgot the will I told you of.

Citizens. Most true ; the will ! — let's stay and hear the will.

Ant. Here is the will, and under Cæsar's seal.

To every Roman citizen he gives,

To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.²⁶

²⁵ *Wit* formerly meant *understanding*, and was so used by all writers.

²⁶ The *drachma* was a Greek coin, equal to *7d.* English. In fact, however, Cæsar left to each citizen three hundred sesterces, equivalent to about

2 *Cit.* Most noble Cæsar ! — we'll revenge his death.

3 *Cit.* O royal Cæsar !

Ant. Hear me with patience.

Citizens. Peace, ho !

Ant. Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,
His private arbours, and new-planted orchards,
On this side Tiber :²⁷ he hath left them you,
And to your heirs for ever ; common pleasures,
To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves.²⁸

Here was a Cæsar ! when comes such another ?

1 *Cit.* Never, never. — Come, away, away !
We'll burn his body in the holy place,
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.
Take up the body.

2 *Cit.* Go fetch fire.

3 *Cit.* Pluck down benches.

4 *Cit.* Pluck down forms,²⁹ windows, any thing.

[*Exeunt Citizens with the body.*

Ant. Now let it work. — Mischief, thou art afoot,
Take thou what course thou wilt ! —

Enter a Servant.

How now, fellow !

Serv. Sir, Octavius is already come to Rome.

Ant. Where is he ?

£14 ; which was practically as good as at least \$100 in our time : no small lift for a poor man.

²⁷ As this scene lies in the Forum, near the Capitol, Cæsar's gardens are, in fact, on *the other* side Tiber. But the Poet wrote as he read in Plutarch.

²⁸ When Cæsar's testament was openly read among them, whereby it appeared that he bequeathed unto every citizen of Rome 75 drachmas a man ; and that he left his gardens and arbours unto the people, which he had on this side of the river Tiber, in the place where now the temple of Fortune is built ; the people then loved him, and were marvellous sorry for him. — PLUTARCH.

²⁹ A *form* is a *long seat*, like those in an audience-room or a school.

Serv. He and Lepidus are at Cæsar's house.

Ant. And thither will I straight to visit him :
He comes upon a wish. Fortune is merry,
And in this mood will give us any thing.

Serv. I heard 'em say, Brutus and Cassius
Are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome.

Ant. Belike they had some notice of the people
How I had moved them. Bring me to Octavius. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Same. A Street.*

Enter CINNA the Poet.

Cin. I dreamt to-night that I did feast with Cæsar,
And things unlucky charge my fantasy :¹
I have no will to wander forth of doors,
Yet something leads me forth.

Enter Citizens.

1 Cit. What is your name?

2 Cit. Whither are you going?

3 Cit. Where do you dwell?

4 Cit. Are you a married man or a bachelor?

2 Cit. Answer every man directly.

1 Cit. Ay, and briefly.

4 Cit. Ay, and wisely.

3 Cit. Ay, and truly ; you were best.

Cin. What is my name? Whither am I going? Where
do I dwell? Am I a married man or a bachelor? Then,
to answer every man directly and briefly, wisely and truly.
Wisely I say I am a bachelor.

2 Cit. That's as much as to say, they are fools that marry :

¹ *Unlucky* is *ill-boding* or *portentous*. *Charge* is *burden* or *oppress*.

you'll bear me a bang for that,² I fear. Proceed; directly.

Cin. Directly, I am going to Cæsar's funeral.

1 Cit. As a friend, or an enemy?

Cin. As a friend.

2 Cit. That matter is answered directly.

4 Cit. For your dwelling,—briefly.

Cin. Briefly, I dwell by the Capitol.

3 Cit. Your name, sir, truly.

Cin. Truly, my name is Cinna.

1 Cit. Tear him to pieces! he's a conspirator.

Cin. I am Cinna the poet, I am Cinna the poet.

4 Cit. Tear him for his bad verses, tear him for his bad verses.

Cin. I am not Cinna the conspirator.

4 Cit. It is no matter; his name's Cinna: pluck but his name out of his heart, and turn him going.³

3 Cit. Tear him, tear him! Come, brands, ho! firebrands! to Brutus', to Cassius'; burn all. Some to Decius' house, and some to Casca's; some to Ligarius': away, go!

[*Exeunt.*]

² "You'll get a banging of me for that."

³ There was a poet called Cinna, who had been no partaker of the conspiracy, but was always one of Cæsar's chiefest friends: he dreamed, the night before, that Cæsar bad him to supper with him, and that, he refusing to go, Cæsar was very importunate with him, and compelled him; so that at length he led him by the hand into a great dark place, where, being marvellously afraid, he was driven to follow him in spite of his heart. This dream put him all night into a fever: and yet, notwithstanding, the next morning he went out of his house, and thrust himself into the press of the common people that were in a great uproar. And because some one called him by his name Cinna, the people falling upon him in their rage slew him outright in the market-place. — PLUTARCH.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Rome. A Room in ANTONY'S House.*¹

ANTONY, OCTAVIUS, and LEPIDUS, seated at a table.

Ant. These many, then, shall die ; their names are prick'd.*Oct.* Your brother too must die : consent you, Lepidus ?²*Lep.* I do consent,—*Oct.* Prick him down, Antony.*Lep.*—Upon condition Publius shall not live,Who is your sister's son, Mark Antony.³*Ant.* He shall not live ; look, with a spot I damn⁴ him.

But, Lepidus, go you to Cæsar's house ;

Fetch the will hither, and we shall determine

How to cut off some charge in legacies.

Lep. What, shall I find you here ?*Oct.* Or here, or at

The Capitol.

[*Exit LEPIDUS.*]

¹ The time of this scene was, historically, in November, B.C. 43 ; some nineteen months after the preceding.—The place of the scene is shown to be at Rome, by Lepidus's being sent to Cæsar's house, and told that he will find his confederates "or here, or at the Capitol." In fact, however, the triumvirs, Octavius, Antonius, and Lepidus, did not meet at Rome to settle the proscription, but on a small island near Bologna.

² They could hardly agree whom they would put to death ; for every one of them would kill their enemies, and save their kinsmen and friends. Yet, at length, giving place to their greedy desire to be revenged of their enemies, they spurned all reverence of blood and holiness of friendship at their feet. For Cæsar left Cicero to Antonius's will ; Antonius also forsook Lucius Cæsar, who was his uncle by his mother ; and both of them together suffered Lepidus to kill his own brother Paulus. — PLUTARCH.

³ According to Plutarch, as quoted in the preceding note, this was *Lucius* Cæsar, not *Publius* ; nor was he Antony's *nephew*, but his uncle by the mother's side. A mistake by the Poet, probably.

⁴ Both the verb to *damn* and the noun *damnation* were often used in the sense of to *condemn* simply. So it is, properly, in the English Bible.

Ant. This is a slight unmeritable⁵ man,
Meet to be sent on errands : is it fit,
The threefold world divided, he should stand
One of the three to share it ?

Oct. So you thought him ;
And took his voice who should be prick'd to die,
In our black sentence and proscription.

Ant. Octavius, I have seen more days than you :
And, though we lay these honours on this man,
To ease ourselves of divers slanderous loads,
He shall but bear them as the ass bears gold,
To groan and sweat under the business,
Either led or driven, as we point the way ;
And, having brought our treasure where we will,
Then take we down his load, and turn him off,
Like to the empty ass, to shake his ears,
And graze in commons.⁶

Oct. You may do your will ;
But he's a tried and valiant soldier.

Ant. So is my horse, Octavius ; and for that
I do appoint him store of provender :
It is a creature that I teach to fight,
To wind,⁷ to stop, to run directly on,
His corporal motion govern'd by my spirit.
And, in some taste, is Lepidus but so ;
He must be taught, and train'd, and bid go forth :
A barren-spirited fellow ; one that feeds
On objects, arts, and imitations,
Which, out of use and staled by other men,

⁵ *Unmeritable* for *unmeriting* or *undeserving*. This indiscriminate use of active and passive forms is very frequent.

⁶ *Commons*, here, is such pasture-lands as in England were not owned by individuals, but occupied by a given neighbourhood *in common*.

⁷ To *wind* is to *turn* or *bend* to the right or the left; the opposite of running "directly on," that is, *straight ahead*.

Begin his fashion :⁸ do not talk of him
 But as a property. And now, Octavius,
 Listen great things : Brutus and Cassius
 Are levying powers : we must straight make head :⁹
 Therefore let our alliance be combined,
 Our best friends made, our means stretch'd out ;
 And let us presently go sit in council,
 How covert matters may be best disclosed,
 And open perils surest answeréd.

Oct. Let us do so : for we are at the stake,
 And bay'd about with many enemies ;¹⁰
 And some that smile have in their hearts, I fear,
 Millions of mischiefs.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Before BRUTUS's Tent, in the Camp near Sardis.*¹

Drum. Enter BRUTUS, LUCILIUS, TITINIUS, and Soldiers ;
 PINDARUS meeting them ; LUCIUS at some distance.

Bru. Stand, ho !

Lucil. Give the word, ho ! and stand.

⁸ That is, one who is always interested in, and talking about, such things — books, works of art, &c. — as everybody else has got tired of and thrown aside. So Falstaff's account of Shallow, in *2 Henry the Fourth*, iii. 2: "He came ever in the rearward of the fashion ; and sung those tunes to the over-scutch'd huswives which he heard the carmen whistle, and sware they were his Fancies or his Good-nights." In the text, *staled* is *outworn* or *grown stale* ; and the reference is not to objects, &c., generally, but only to those which have lost the interest of freshness.

⁹ To *make head* is to *raise an army*, or to *lead one forth*. Often so.

¹⁰ An allusion to bear-baiting. One of the old English sports was, to tie a bear to a stake, and then set a pack of dogs to barking at him, and worrying him. So in *Macbeth*, v. 7: "They've tied me to a stake ; I cannot fly, but, bear-like, I must fight the course." See, also, page 69, note 33.

¹ This scene is separated from the foregoing, historically, by about a year ; the remaining events of the drama having taken place in the Fall, B.C. 42.

Bru. What now, Lucilius ! is Cassius near ?

Lucil. He is at hand ; and Pindarus is come
To do you salutation from his master.

[PINDARUS gives a letter to BRUTUS.

Bru. He greets me well. — Your master, Pindarus,
In his own charge, or by ill officers,²
Hath given me some worthy cause to wish
Things done, undone : but, if he be at hand,
I shall be satisfied.

Pin. I do not doubt
But that my noble master will appear
Such as he is, full of regard and honour.

Bru. He is not doubted. — A word, Lucilius :
How he received you, let me be resolved.

Lucil. With courtesy and with respect enough ;
But not with such familiar instances,
Nor with such free and friendly conference,
As he hath used of old.

Bru. Thou hast described
A hot friend cooling : ever note, Lucilius,
When love begins to sicken and decay,
It useth an enforcèd ceremony.
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith :
But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,³
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle ;
But, when they should endure the bloody spur,
They fall their crests, and, like deceitful jades,⁴
Sink in the trial. Comes his army on ?

Lucil. They mean this night in Sardis to be quarter'd ;

² That is, either by his own command, or by officers, subordinates, who have abused their trust, prostituting it to the ends of private gain.

³ Horses spirited or mettlesome when held back, or restrained.

⁴ Here, as often, *fall* is transitive ; *let fall*. — A deceitful jade is a horse that promises well in appearance, but " sinks in the trial."

The greater part, the Horse in general,
Are come with Cassius. [March within.]

Bru. Hark ! he is arrived :
March gently on to meet him.

Enter CASSIUS and Soldiers.

Cass. Stand, ho !

Bru. Stand, ho ! Speak the word along.

Within. Stand !

Within. Stand !

Within. Stand !

Cass. Most noble brother, you have done me wrong.

Bru. Judge me, you gods ! wrong I mine enemies ?
And, if not so, how should I wrong a brother ?

Cass. Brutus, this sober form of yours hides wrongs ;
And when you do them —

Bru. Cassius, be content ;
Speak your griefs softly, — I do know you well.
Before the eyes of both our armies here,
Which should perceive nothing but love from us,
Let us not wrangle : bid them move away ;
Then in my tent, Cassius, enlarge⁵ your griefs,
And I will give you audience.

Cass. Pindarus,
Bid our commanders lead their charges⁶ off
A little from this ground.

Bru. Lucius, do you the like ; and let no man
Come to our tent till we have done our conference. —
Lucilius and Titinius, guard the door. [Exeunt.]

⁵ To enlarge is, properly, to *set free* or to *let go at large* ; here it means *speak freely of* or *unfold*.

⁶ "Their charges" are, of course, the *troops* under their command.

SCENE III.—*Within the Tent of BRUTUS.*

Enter BRUTUS and CASSIUS.

Cass. That you have wrong'd me doth appear in this :
You have condemn'd and noted¹ Lucius Pella
For taking bribes here of the Sardians ;
Whereas my letters, praying on his side
Because I knew the man, were slighted off.

Bru. You wrong'd yourself to write² in such a case.

Cass. In such a time as this it is not meet
That every nice offence should bear his³ comment.

Bru. And let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself
Are much condemn'd to have an itching palm ;
To sell and mart your offices for gold
To undeservers.

Cass. I an itching palm !
You know that you are Brutus that speaks this,
Or, by the gods, this speech were else your last.

Bru. The name of Cassius honours this corruption,
And chastisement doth therefore hide his head.

Cass. Chastisement !

Bru. Remember March, the Ides of March remember :

¹ That is, disgraced him, set a mark or stigma upon him.

² "Wrong'd yourself by writing." The infinitive used gerundively again. So too in the second speech after, "condemn'd to have" is condemn'd for having ; also "to sell and mart," for selling and marting. The usage is uncommonly frequent in this play.

³ His for its, as usual, referring to offence. The meaning is that every petty or trifling offence should not be rigidly scrutinized and censured. *Nice* was often used thus.—Cassius naturally thinks that "the honourable men whose daggers have stabb'd Cæsar" should not peril their cause by moral squeamishness. And it is a very noteworthy point, that the digesting of that act seems to have entailed upon Brutus a sort of moral dyspepsia. It appears, a little further on, that he is more willing to receive and apply money got by others than to use the necessary means of getting it.

Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake?
What villain touch'd his body, that did stab,
And not for justice? What! shall one of us,
That struck the foremost man of all this world
But for supporting robbers,—shall we now
Contaminate our fingers with base bribes,
And sell the mighty space of our large honours
For so much trash as may be grasp'd thus?
I had rather be a dog, and bay the Moon,
Than such a Roman.

Bru. Go to ;⁶ you are not, Cassius.

Cass. I am.

Bru. I say you are not.

Cass. Urge me no more, I shall forget myself;
Have mind upon your health, tempt me no further.

Bru. Away, slight man !

Cass. Is't possible?

⁴ Still another gerundial infinitive: "In hedging me in."

5 Now Cassius would have done Brutus much honour, as Brutus did unto him, but Brutus most commonly prevented him, and went first unto him, both because he was the elder man as also for that he was sickly of body. And men reputed him commonly to be very skilful in wars, but otherwise marvellous choleric and cruel, who sought to rule men by fear rather than with lenity. — PLUTARCH.

⁶ *Go to* is a phrase of varying import, sometimes of reproof, sometimes of encouragement. *Hush up, come on, go ahead, be off* are among its meanings. It was used a great deal, especially in colloquial speech.

Cass. O ye gods, ye gods ! must I endure all this ?

Bru. All this ! ay, more : fret till your proud heart break ;
Go show your slaves how choleric you are,
And make your bondmen tremble. Must I budge ?
Must I observe you ? must I stand and crouch
Under your testy humour ? By the gods,
You shall digest the venom of your spleen,⁷
Though it do split you ; for from this day forth
I'll use you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter,
When you are waspish.

Cass. Is it come to this ?

Bru. You say you are a better soldier :
Let it appear so ; make your vaunting true,
And it shall please me well : for mine own part,
I shall be glad to learn of abler men.

Cass. You wrong me every way ; you wrong me, Brutus ;
I said, an elder soldier, not a better :⁸
Did I say *better* ?

Bru. If you did, I care not.

Cass. When Cæsar lived he durst not thus have moved
me.

Bru. Peace, peace ! you durst not so have tempted him.

Cass. I durst not !

Bru. No.

Cass. What, durst not tempt him ?

Bru. For your life you durst not.

⁷ The spleen was held to be the special seat of the sudden and explosive emotions and passions, whether of mirth or anger.

⁸ This mistake of Brutus is well conceived. Cassius was much the abler soldier, and Brutus knew it ; and the mistake grew from his consciousness of the truth of what he thought he heard. Long before this time, Cassius had served as Quæstor under Marcus Crassus in his expedition against the Parthians ; and, when the army was torn all to pieces, both Crassus and his son being killed, Cassius displayed great ability in bringing off a remnant ; as he also did after that, in the military administration of Syria.

Cass. Do not presume too much upon my love ;
I may do that I shall be sorry for.

Bru. You have done that you should be sorry for.
There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats ;
For I am arm'd so strong in honesty,
That they pass by me as the idle wind,
Which I respect not. I did send to you
For certain sums of gold, which you denied me ;—
For I can raise no money by vile means :
By Heaven, I had rather coin my heart,
And drop my blood for drachmas, than to wring
From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash
By any indirection :⁹— I did send
To you for gold to pay my legions,
Which you denied me. Was that done like Cassius ?
Should I have answer'd Caius Cassius so ?
When Marcus Brutus grows so covetous,
To lock such rascal counters¹⁰ from his friends,
Be ready, gods, with all your thunderbolts,
Dash him to peices !

Cass. I denied you not.¹¹

⁹ *Indirection* is, properly, *crookedness*. As the Latin *directus* is *straight*, hence *right*, so *indirectus* is *crooked*, hence *wrong*.

¹⁰ "So covetous as to lock," of course. The Poet often omits *as* in such cases, for prosodical reasons.— *Rascal* was much used as a general term of contempt, meaning *worthless* or *base*.— *Counters* were round pieces of cheap metal used in making calculations.

¹¹ Whilst Brutus and Cassius were together in the city of Smyrna, Brutus prayed Cassius to let him have part of the money whereof he had great store. Cassius's friends hindered this request, and earnestly dissuaded him from it; persuading him, that it was no reason that Brutus should have the money which Cassius had gotten together by sparing, and levied with great evil will of the people their subjects, for him to bestow liberally upon his soldiers, and by this means to win their good wills, by Cassius's charge. Notwithstanding, Cassius gave him the third part of this total sum.— PLUTARCH.

Bru. You did.

Cass. I did not : he was but a fool that brought
My answer back. Brutus hath rived my heart :
A friend should bear his friend's infirmities,
But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.

Bru. I do not, till you practise them on me.

Cass. You love me not.

Bru. I do not like your faults.

Cass. A friendly eye could never see such faults.

Bru. A flatterer's would not, though they did appear
As huge as high Olympus.

Cass. Come, Antony, and young Octavius, come,
Revenge yourselves alone on Cassius,
For Cassius is a-weary of the world ;
Hated by one he loves ; braved¹² by his brother ;
Check'd like a bondman ; all his faults observed,
Set in a note-book, learn'd, and conn'd by rote,
To cast into my teeth. O, I could weep
My spirit from mine eyes ! — There is my dagger,
And here my naked breast ; within, a heart
Dearer than Plutus' mine,¹³ richer than gold :
If that thou be'st a Roman, take it forth ;
I, that denied thee gold, will give my heart :
Strike, as thou didst at Cæsar ; for I know,
When thou didst hate him worst, thou lovedst him better
Than ever thou lovedst Cassius.

Bru. Sheathe your dagger :
Be angry when you will, it shall have scope ;
Do what you will, dishonour shall be humour.¹⁴

¹² *Braved* is *defied*, or treated with *bluster* and *bravado*.

¹³ Plutus is the old god of riches, who had all the world's gold in his keeping and disposal.

¹⁴ " Whatever dishonourable thing you may do, I will set it down to the humour or infirmity of the moment."

O Cassius, you are yokèd with a lamb
 That carries anger as the flint bears fire ;¹⁵
 Who, much enforcèd, shows a hasty spark,
 And straight is cold again.

Cass. Hath Cassius lived
 To be but mirth and laughter to his Brutus,
 When grief, and blood ill-temper'd, vexeth him ?
Bru. When I spoke that, I was ill-temper'd too.
Cass. Do you confess so much ? Give me your hand.
Bru. And my heart too.

Cass. O Brutus, —
Bru. What's the matter ?
Cass. — Have not you love enough to bear with me,
 When that rash humour which my mother gave me
 Makes me forgetful ?

Bru. Yes, Cassius ; and, henceforth,
 When you are over-earnest with your Brutus,
 He'll think your mother chides, and leave you so.

Poet. [Within.] Let me go in to see the generals :
 There is some grudge between 'em ; 'tis not meet
 They be alone.

Lucil. [Within.] You shall not come to them.

Poet. [Within.] Nothing but death shall stay me.

Enter Poet, followed by LUCILIUS and TITINIUS.

Cass. How now ! what's the matter ?

Poet. For shame, you generals ! what do you mean ?
 Love, and be friends, as two such men should be ;

¹⁵ In my boyhood, the idea was common, of fire *sleeping* in the flint, and being awaked by the stroke of the steel. I am not sure whether it was known in the Poet's time, that in fact the flint cuts off microscopic bits of steel, which are ignited by the friction. Hooker takes it as Shakespeare does ; *Ecclesiastical Polity*, vii. 22, 3 : "It is not sufficient to carry religion in our hearts, as fire is carried in flint-stones, but we are outwardly, visibly, apparently, to serve and honour the living God."

For I have seen more years, I'm sure, than ye.¹⁶

Cass. Ha, ha ! how vilely doth this cynic rhyme !

Bru. Get you hence, sirrah ; saucy fellow, hence !

Cass. Bear with him, Brutus ; 'tis his fashion.

Bru. I'll know his humour, when he knows his time :

What should the wars do with these jigging fools ? —

Companion, hence !¹⁷

Cass. Away, away, be gone ! [Exit Poet.

Bru. Lucilius and Titinius, bid the commanders
Prepare to lodge their companies to-night.

Cass. And come yourselves, and bring Messala with you
Immediately to us. [Exeunt LUCILIUS and TITINIUS.

Bru. Lucius, a bowl of wine !

Cass. I did not think you could have been so angry.

Bru. O Cassius, I am sick of many griefs.

Cass. Of your philosophy you make no use,
If you give place to accidental evils.¹⁸

¹⁶ One Marcus Favonius, that took upon him to counterfeit a philosopher, not with wisdom and discretion, but with a certain bedlam and frantic motion, would needs come into the chamber, though the men offered to keep him out. Now, though he used this bold manner of speech after the profession of the Cynic philosophers, (as who would say, *Dogs,*) yet his boldness did not hurt many times, because they did but laugh at him to see him so mad. This Favonius at that time, in despite of the door-keepers, came into the chamber, and with a certain scoffing and mocking gesture, which he counterfeited of purpose, rehearsed the verses which old Nestor said in Homer :

My lords, I pray you hearken both to me,
For I have seen mo years than suchie three.

Cassius fell a-laughing at him ; but Brutus thrust him out of the chamber, and called him dog, and counterfeit Cynic. Howbeit his coming in brake their strife at that time, and so they left each other. — PLUTARCH.

¹⁷ *Jig* signified a ballad or ditty, as well as a dance. *Companion* is here a term of contempt, as we now use *fellow*.

¹⁸ In his philosophy, Brutus was a mixture of the Stoic and the Platonist. What he says of Portia's death is among the best things in the play, and is in Shakespeare's noblest style. Deep grief loves not many words.

Bru. No man bears sorrow better. Portia is dead.

Cass. Ha ! Portia !

Bru. She is dead.

Cass. How 'scaped I killing when I cross'd you so !—
O insupportable and touching loss !—
Upon what sickness ?

Bru. Impatient¹⁹ of my absence,
And grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony
Have made themselves so strong ;— for with her death
That tidings came ;— with this she fell distract,
And, her attendants absent, swallow'd fire.²⁰

Cass. And died so ?

Bru. Even so.

Cass. O ye immortal gods !

Enter LUCIUS, with wine and taper.

Bru. Speak no more of her.— Give me a bowl of wine.—
In this I bury all unkindness, Cassius. [Drinks.

Cass. My heart is thirsty for that noble pledge.—
Fill Lucius, till the wine o'erswell the cup :
I cannot drink too much of Brutus' love. [Drinks.

Bru. Come in, Titinius !—

[Exit LUCIUS.

¹⁹ Strict harmony of construction would require *impatience* here, or else *grieved* for *grief* in the next line. But the Poet is not very particular in such matters. The sense is clear enough.

²⁰ *Distract* for *distracted*. The shortening of preterites in this way was very common.— It appears something uncertain whether Portia's death was before or after her husband's. Plutarch represents it as occurring before; but Merivale follows those who place it after. Plutarch's account is as follows: "For Portia, Brutus's wife, Nicolaus the philosopher and Valerius Maximus do write, that she determining to kill herself (her friends carefully looking to her to keep her from it) took hot burning coals, and cast them into her mouth, and kept her mouth so close that she choked herself. There was a letter of Brutus found, written to his friends, complaining of their negligence, that, his wife being sick, they would not help her, but suffered her to kill herself, choosing to die rather than to languish in pain."

Re-enter TITINIUS, with MESSALA.

Welcome, good Messala.—

Now sit we close about this taper here,
And call in question²¹ our necessities.

Cass. Portia, art thou gone?

Bru. No more, I pray you.—

Messala, I have here receivèd letters,
That young Octavius and Mark Antony
Come down upon us with a mighty power,
Bending their expedition²² toward Philippi.

Mes. Myself have letters of the selfsame tenour.

Bru. With what addition?

Mes. That by proscription and bills of outlawry,
Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus,
Have put to death an hundred Senators.

Bru. Therein our letters do not well agree :
Mine speak of seventy Senators that died
By their proscriptions, Cicero being one.²³

Cass. Cicero one !

Mes. Cicero is dead,
And by that order of proscription.—
Had you your letters from your wife, my lord?

Bru. No, Messala.

Mes. Nor nothing in your letters writ of her?

Bru. Nothing, Messala.²⁴

²¹ "Call in question" here means *talk* or *converse about*. *Question*, both noun and verb, was often used in that sense.

²² *Directing their march.* So the Poet has *expedition* repeatedly.

²³ These three, Octavius, Antonius, and Lepidus, made an agreement, and divided the provinces belonging to the empire of Rome among themselves, and did set up bills of proscription and outlawry, condemning two hundred of the noblest men of Rome to suffer death, and among that number Cicero was one. — PLUTARCH.

²⁴ This may seem inconsistent with what has gone before : but we are to suppose that Brutus's friends at Rome did not write to him directly of Por-

Mes. That, methinks, is strange.

Bru. Why ask you? hear you aught of her in yours?

Mes. No, my lord.

Bru. Now, as you are a Roman, tell me true.

Mes. Then like a Roman bear the truth I tell:
For certain she is dead, and by strange manner.

Bru. Why, farewell, Portia.—We must die, Messala:
With meditating that she must die once,²⁵
I have the patience to endure it now.

Mes. Even so great men great losses should endure.

Cass. I have as much of this in art²⁶ as you,
But yet my nature could not bear it so.

Bru. Well, to our work alive.²⁷ What do you think
Of marching to Philippi presently?

Cass. I do not think it good.

Bru. Your reason?

Cass. This it is:

"Tis better that the enemy seek us:
So shall he waste his means, weary his soldiers,
Doing himself offence; whilst we, lying still,
Are full of rest, defence, and nimbleness.

Bru. Good reasons must, of force,²⁸ give place to better.

tia's death, lest the news might upset him too much; but wrote to some common friends in the army, directing them to break the news to him, as they should deem it safe and prudent to do so.

²⁵ Once for one time or other, sometime. So in *The Merry Wives*, iii. 4:
"I pray thee, once to-night give my sweet Nan this ring."

²⁶ Art was sometimes used for theory as opposed to practice.

²⁷ Probably meaning "the work we have to do with the living."

²⁸ Of force is of necessity or necessarily.—Plutarch represents this talk as occurring at Philippi just before the battle: "Cassius was of opinion not to try this war at one battle, but rather to delay time, and to draw it out in length, considering that they were the stronger in money, and the weaker in men and armour. But Brutus, in contrary manner, did always, before and at that time also, desire nothing more than to put all to the hazard of battle, as soon as might be possible; to the end he might either quickly restore his country to her liberty, or rid him of this miserable world."

The people 'twixt Philippi and this ground
Do stand but in a forced affection ;
For they have grudged us contribution :
The enemy, marching along by them,
By them shall make a fuller number up,
Come on refresh'd, new-aided, and encouraged ;
From which advantage shall we cut him off,
If at Philippi we do face him there,
These people at our back.

Cass. Hear me, good brother.

Bru. Under your pardon. You must note besides,
That we have tried the utmost of our friends,
Our legions are brim-full, our cause is ripe :
The enemy increaseth every day ;
We, at the height, are ready to decline.
There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat ;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.²⁹

Cass. Then, with your will, go on :
We will along ourselves, and meet them at Philippi.

Bru. The deep of night is crept upon our talk,
And nature must obey necessity ;
Which we will niggard with a little rest.
There is no more to say ?

Cass. No more. Good night:
Early to-morrow will we rise, and hence.

Bru. Lucius, my gown!—Farewell now, good Messala:—

²⁹ Ventures for what is risked or adventured. The figure of a ship is kept up; and *venture* denotes whatever is put on board, in hope of profit. The Poet has it repeatedly so.

Good night, Titinius : — noble, noble Cassius,
Good night, and good repose.

Cass. O my dear brother !
This was an ill beginning of the night :
Never come such division 'tween our souls !
Let it not, Brutus.

Bru. Every thing is well.

Cass. Good night, my lord.

Bru. Good night, good brother.

Tit. } Good night, Lord Brutus.
Mes. }

Bru. Farewell, every one. —

[*Exeunt CASSIUS, TITINIUS, and MESSALA.*]

Re-enter LUCIUS, with the gown.

Give me the gown. Where is thy instrument ?

Luc. Here in the tent.

Bru. What, thou speak'st drowsily :
Poor knave,³⁰ I blame thee not ; thou art o'er-watch'd.
Call Claudius and some other of my men ;
I'll have them sleep on cushions in my tent.

Luc. Varro and Claudius !

Enter VARRO and CLAUDIUS.

Var. Calls my lord ?

Bru. I pray you, sirs, lie in my tent and sleep ;
It may be I shall raise you by-and-by
On business to my brother Cassius.

Var. So please you, we will stand and watch your pleasure.

Bru. I will not have it so ; lie down, good sirs :
It may be I shall otherwise bethink me. —

³⁰ *Knave* was much used as a term of endearment, or of loving familiarity with those of lower rank.

Look, Lucius, here's the book I sought for so ;
I put it in the pocket of my gown.³¹

[VARRO and CLAUDIUS *lie down*.

Luc. I was sure your lordship did not give it me.

Bru. Bear with me, good boy, I am much forgetful.
Canst thou hold up thy heavy eyes awhile,
And touch thy instrument a strain or two ?

Luc. Ay, my lord, an't please you.

Bru. It does, my boy :
I trouble thee too much, but thou art willing.

Luc. It is my duty, sir.
Bru. I should not urge thy duty past thy might ;
I know young bloods³² look for a time of rest.

Luc. I have slept, my lord, already.
Bru. It was well done ; and thou shalt sleep again ;
I will not hold thee long : if I do live,
I will be good to thee. —

[LUCIUS *plays and sings till he falls asleep*.

This is a sleepy tune. — O murderous Slumber,
Lay'st thou thy leaden mace upon my boy,
That plays thee music ?³³ — Gentle knave, good night ;
I will not do thee so much wrong to wake thee :
If thou dost nod, thou breakst thy instrument ;

³¹ These two simple lines are among the best things in the play. Just consider how much is implied in them, and what a picture they give of the earnest, thoughtful, book-loving Brutus. And indeed all his noblest traits of character come out, "in simple and pure soul," in this exquisite scene with Lucius, which is hardly surpassed by any thing in Shakespeare.

³² *Bloods for persons.* So in *Much Ado*, iii. 3 : " How giddily he turns about all the hot *bloods* between fourteen and five-and-thirty."

³³ *Mace* was formerly used for *sceptre*. The mace is called *leaden*, from its causing heaviness in the subject of it. — Slumber has the epithet *murderous*, because sleep is regarded as the image of death ; or, as Shelley puts it, " Death and his brother Sleep." — The boy is spoken of as playing music to Slumber, because the purpose of his music is to soothe the perturbations out of his master's mind, and put him to sleep.

I'll take it from thee ; and, good boy, good night.—
Let me see, let me see ; is not the leaf turn'd down
Where I left reading ? Here it is, I think.

Enter the Ghost of CÆSAR.

How ill this taper burns !³⁴—Ha ! who comes here ?
I think it is the weakness of mine eyes
That shapes this monstrous apparition.
It comes upon me.—Art thou any thing ?
Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,
That makest my blood cold, and my hair to stare ?³⁵
Speak to me what thou art.

Ghost. Thy evil spirit, Brutus.

Bru. Why comest thou ?

Ghost. To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.

Bru. Well ; then I shall see thee again ?

Ghost. Ay, at Philippi.

Bru. Why, I will see thee at Philippi, then. [*Exit* Ghost.
Now I have taken heart thou vanishest :³⁶
Ill spirit, I would hold more talk with thee.³⁷—

³⁴ The coming of a ghost was believed to make lights burn dimly. So, in *Richard the Third*, v. 3, when the ghosts appear to Richard, he says, "The lights burn blue."

³⁵ A singular use of *stare*. Of course it must mean to *stick out*, or, as it is in *Hamlet*, to "stand on end, like quills upon the fretful porpentine." We have a similar expression in *The Tempest*, i. 2: "Ferdinand, with hair *upstaring*,—then like reeds, not hair."

³⁶ This strongly, though quietly, marks the Ghost as *subjective* : as soon as Brutus recovers his firmness, the illusion is broken. The order of things is highly judicious here, in bringing the "horrible vision" upon Brutus just after he has heard of Portia's shocking death. With that great sorrow weighing upon him, he might well see ghosts. The thickening of calamities upon him, growing out of his stabbing exploit, naturally awakens remorse.

³⁷ Above all, the ghost that appeared unto Brutus shewed plainly that the gods were offended with the murder of Cæsar. The vision was thus : Brutus thought he heard a noise at his tent-door, and, looking towards the

Boy, Lucius!—Varro! Claudius! Sirs, awake!—
Claudius!

Luc. The strings, my lord, are false.

Bru. He thinks he still is at his instrument.—

Lucius, awake!

Luc. My lord?

Bru. Didst thou dream, Lucius, that thou so criedst out?

Luc. My lord, I do not know that I did cry.

Bru. Yes, that thou didst: didst thou see any thing?

Luc. Nothing, my lord.

Bru. Sleep again, Lucius.—Sirrah Claudius!—

[*To VAR.*] Fellow thou, awake!

Var. My lord?

Clau. My lord?

Bru. Why did you so cry out, sirs, in your sleep?

Var. } Did we, my lord?

Clau. } Did we, my lord?

Bru. Ay: saw you any thing?

Var. No, my lord, I saw nothing.

Clau. Nor I, my lord.

Bru. Go and commend me to my brother Cassius;

Bid him set on his powers betimes before,

And we will follow.

Var. }
Clau. }

It shall be done, my lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

light of the lamp that waxed very dim, he saw a horrible vision of a man, of a wonderful greatness and dreadful look, which at the first made him marvellously afraid. But when he saw that it did no hurt, but stood at his bedside and said nothing; at length he asked him what he was. The image answered him: "I am thy ill angel, Brutus, and thou shalt see me by the city of Philippes." Then Brutus replied again, and said, "Well, I shall see thee then." Therewithal the spirit presently vanished from him.—PLUTARCH.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Plains of Philippi.*

Enter OCTAVIUS, ANTONY, and their Army.

Oct. Now, Antony, our hopes are answeréd.
You said the enemy would not come down,
But keep the hills and upper regions :
It proves not so ; their battles¹ are at hand :
They mean to warn² us at Philippi here,
Answering before we do demand of them.

Ant. Tut, I am in their bosoms, and I know
Wherefore they do it : they could³ be content
To visit other places ; and come down
With fearful bravery,⁴ thinking by this face
To fasten in our thoughts that they have courage ;
But 'tis not so.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Prepare you, generals :
The enemy comes on in gallant show ;

¹ *Battle* was used for an *army*, especially an army *embattled*, or ordered in battle-array. The plural is here used with historical correctness, as Brutus and Cassius had each an army ; the two armies of course co-operating, and acting together as one.

² To *warn* for to *summon*. So in *King John* : " Who is it that hath *warn'd* us to the walls ? " And in *King Richard III.* : " And sent to *warn* them to his royal presence."

³ *Could* for *would*. The auxiliaries *could*, *should*, and *would* were often used indiscriminately.—*Content*, here, means more than in our use, and has the sense of *be glad*, or *prefer*.

⁴ *Bravery* is *bravado* or *defiance*. Often so. The epithet *fearful* probably means that fear is what thus puts them upon attempting to intimidate by display and brag.

Their bloody sign of battle is hung out,
And something to be done immediately.

Ant. Octavius, lead your battle softly on,
Upon the left hand of the even field.

Oct. Upon the right hand I ; keep thou the left.

Ant. Why do you cross me in this exigent?

Oct. I do not cross you ; but I will do so.⁵ [March.

Drum. Enter BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and their Army ; LUCILIUS,
TITINIUS, MESSALA, and others.

Bru. They stand, and would have parley.

Cass. Stand fast, Titinius : we must out and talk.

Oct. Mark Antony, shall we give sign of battle ?

Ant. No, Cæsar, we will answer on their charge.⁶
Make forth ; the generals would have some words.

Oct. Stir not until the signal.

Bru. Words before blows : is it so, countrymen ?

Oct. Not that we love words better, as you do.

Bru. Good words are better than bad strokes, Octavius.

Ant. In your bad strokes, Brutus, you give good words :
Witness the hole you made in Cæsar's heart,
Crying, *Long live ! hail, Cæsar !*

⁵ That is, "I will do as I have said"; not, "I will cross you." At this time, Octavius was but twenty-one years old, and Antony was old enough to be his father. At the time of Cæsar's death, when Octavius was in his nineteenth year, Antony thought he was going to manage him easily and have it all his own way with him, but he found the youngster as stiff as a crow-bar, and could do nothing with him. Cæsar's youngest sister Julia was married to Marcus Atius Balbus, and their daughter Atia, again, was married to Caius Octavius, a nobleman of the Plebeian order. From this marriage sprang the present Octavius, who afterwards became the Emperor Augustus. He was mainly educated by his great-uncle, was advanced to the Patrician order, and was adopted as his son and heir; so that his full and proper designation at this time was Caius Julius Cæsar Octavianus. The text gives a right taste of the man, who always stood firm as a post against Antony, till the latter finally knocked himself to pieces against him.

⁶ Charge for attack ; and answer in the sense of *meet in combat*.

Cass.

Antony,

The posture of your blows are yet unknown ;⁷
But, for your words, they rob the Hybla bees,
And leave them honeyless.⁸

Ant.

Not stingless too.

Bru. O, yes, and soundless too ;
For you have stol'n their buzzing, Antony,
And very wisely threat before you sting.

Ant. Villains, you did not so, when your vile daggers
Hack'd one another in the sides of Cæsar :
You show'd your teeth like apes, and fawn'd like hounds,
And bow'd like bondmen, kissing Cæsar's feet ;
Whilst damnèd Casca, like a cur, behind
Struck Cæsar on the neck. O flatterers !

Cass. Flatterers ! — Now, Brutus, thank yourself :
This tongue had not offended so to-day,
If Cassius might have ruled.

Oct. Come, come, the cause : if arguing make us sweat,
The proof of it will turn to redder drops.

Look, —

I draw a sword against conspirators :
When think you that the sword goes up again ?
Never, till Cæsar's three-and-thirty wounds
Be well avenged ;⁹ or till another Cæsar

⁷ *Posture* for *nature* or *manner*, probably; rather an odd use of the word. — The verb *are* is made to agree with the nearest substantive, *blows*, instead of with its proper nominative, *posture*. See vol. xii. page 87, note 27.

⁸ *Hybla* was the name of a place in Sicily, noted for the fine flavour of its honey. — The meaning is, that Antony could not be so "honey-tongued," unless he had quite exhausted thyme-flavoured Hybla.

⁹ The historical number of Cæsar's wounds is three-and-twenty, and so Shakespeare read it in Plutarch. But the poets care little for exactness in such matters. In Beaumont and Fletcher's *Two Noble Gentlemen*, we have "Cæsar's two-and-thirty wounds." — This man, Octavius, has been a standing puzzle and enigma to the historians, from the seeming contradictions of his character. The later writers, however, especially Merivale and Smith,

Have added slaughter to the sword of traitors.¹⁰

Bru. Cæsar, thou canst not die by traitors' hands,
Unless thou bring'st them with thee.

Oct. So I hope ;
I was not born to die on Brutus' sword.
Bru. O, if thou wert the noblest of thy strain,¹¹
Young man, thou couldst not die more honourable.

Cass. A peevish schoolboy, worthless of such honour,
Join'd with a masker and a reveller !¹²

Ant. Old Cassius still !

Oct. Come, Antony ; away ! —
Defiance, traitors, hurl we in your teeth :
If you dare fight to-day, come to the field ;
If not, when you have stomachs.¹³

[*Exeunt OCTAVIUS, ANTONY, and their Army.*

Cass. Why, now, blow wind, swell billow, and swim bark !
The storm is up, and all is on the hazard.

Bru. Ho, Lucilius ! hark ; a word with you.

Lucil. My lord ? [*BRUTUS and LUCILIUS converse apart.*

Cass. Messala, —

Mes. What says my general ?

Cass. Messala,

This is my birth-day ; as this very day

find that the one principle that gave unity to his life and reconciled those contradictions, was a steadfast, inflexible purpose to avenge the murder of his illustrious uncle and adoptive father.

¹⁰ "Till you, traitors as you are, have added the slaughtering of me, another Cæsar, to that of Julius."

¹¹ *Strain* is *stock, lineage, or race* ; a common use of the word in Shakespeare's time. So in *King Henry V.*, ii. 4 : "He is bred out of that bloody strain that haunted us in our familiar paths."

¹² A peevish school-boy, joined with a masker and a reveller, and unworthy even of that honour. The more common meaning of *peevish* was *foolish*.

¹³ *Stomach* was often used for *appetite*. Here it means an appetite for fighting, of course. See vol. xi. page 158, note 14.

Was Cassius born. Give me thy hand, Messala :
Be thou my witness that against my will,
As Pompey was,¹⁴ I am compell'd to set
Upon one battle all our liberties.
You know that I held Epicurus strong,
And his opinion :¹⁵ now I change my mind,
And partly credit things that do presage.
Coming from Sardis, on our foremost ensign
Two mighty eagles fell ; and there they perch'd,
Gorging and feeding from our soldiers' hands ;
Who to Philippi here consorted us :
This morning are they fled away and gone ;¹⁶
And in their steads do ravens, crows, and kites,
Fly o'er our heads, and downward look on us,
As we were sickly prey : their shadows seem
A canopy most fatal, under which
Our army lies, ready to give up the ghost.

Mes. Believe not so.

Cass. I but believe it partly ;

¹⁴ Alluding to the battle of Pharsalia, which took place in the year B.C. 48. Pompey was forced into that battle, against his better judgment, by the inexperienced and impatient men about him, who, inasmuch as they had more than twice Cæsar's number of troops, fancied they could easily crunch him up if they could but meet him. So they tried it, and he quickly crunched up them.

¹⁵ "I was strongly attached to the doctrines of Epicurus." Plutarch has the following in reference to the ghosting of Brutus: "Cassius being in opinion an Epicurean, and reasoning thereon with Brutus, spake to him touching the vision thus: 'In our sect, Brutus, we have an opinion, that we do not always feel or see that which we suppose we do both see and feel, but that our senses, being credulous and therefore easily abused, imagine they see and conjecture that which in truth they do not.'"

¹⁶ When they raised their camp, there came two eagles that, flying with a marvellous force, lighted upon two of the foremost ensigns, and always followed the soldiers, which gave them meat and fed them, until they came near to the city of Philippi ; and there, one day only before the battle, they both flew away.—PLUTARCH.

For I am fresh of spirit, and resolved
To meet all perils very constantly.

Bru. Even so, Lucilius.

Cass. Now, most noble Brutus,
The gods to-day stand friendly, that we may,
Lovers in peace, lead on our days to age !
But, since th' affairs of men rest still incertain,
Let's reason with ¹⁷ the worst that may befall.
If we do lose this battle, then is this
The very last time we shall speak together :
What are you, then, determinéd to do?

Bru. Even by the rule of that philosophy
By which I did blame Cato for the death
Which he did give himself ; — I know not how,
But I do find it cowardly and vile,
For fear of what might fall, so to prevent
The time of life ; ¹⁸ — arming myself with patience
To stay the providence of some high powers
That govern us below.

Cass. Then, if we lose this battle,
You are contented to be led in triumph
Thorough the streets of Rome ?

Bru. No, Cassius, no : think not, thou noble Roman,

¹⁷ To *reason with* here means to *talk* or *discourse about*. The use of to *reason for* to *converse* or *discourse* occurs repeatedly.

¹⁸ *Prevent* is here used in its literal sense of *anticipate*. — By *time* is meant the full time, the natural period. — To the understanding of this speech, it must be observed, that the *sense* of the words, "arming myself," &c., follows next after the words, "which he did give himself." — In this passage, Shakespeare was misled by an error in North's version of Plutarch, where we have *trust* instead of *trusted*. "Brutus answered him, 'Being yet but a young man, and not over greatly experienced in the world, I *trust* (I know not how) a certain rule of philosophy, by the which I did greatly blame Cato for killing himself, as being no lawful act, touching the gods; nor, concerning men, valiant: but, being now in the midst of the danger, I am of a contrary mind.'"

That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome ;
 He bears too great a mind.¹⁹ But this same day
 Must end that work the Ides of March begun ;
 And whether we shall meet again I know not.
 Therefore our everlasting farewell take :
 For ever, and for ever, farewell, Cassius !
 If we do meet again, why, we shall smile ;
 If not, why, then this parting was well made.

Cass. For ever, and for ever, farewell, Brutus !
 If we do meet again, we'll smile indeed ;
 If not, 'tis true this parting was well made.

Bru. Why, then lead on. O, that a man might know
 The end of this day's business ere it come !
 But it sufficeth that the day will end,
 And then the end is known. — Come, ho ! away ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — *The Same. The Field of Battle.*

Alarums. *Enter BRUTUS and MESSALA.*

Bru. Ride, ride, Messala, ride, and give these bills
 Unto the legions on the other side :¹

¹⁹ The philosopher indeed renounced all confidence in his own principles. He had adopted them from reading or imitation; they were not the natural growth of instinct or genuine reflection; and, as may easily happen in such a case, his faith in them failed when they were tested by adversity. As long as there seemed a chance that the *godlike stroke* would be justified by success, Brutus claimed the glory of maintaining a righteous cause; but, when all hope fled, he could take leave of philosophy and life together, and exclaim, *I once dreamed that virtue was a thing; I find her only a name, and the mere slave of fortune.* He had blamed Cato for flying from misery by self-murder; but he learnt to justify the same desperate act when he contemplated committing it himself. — MERIVALE.

¹ "The legions on the other side" are those commanded by Cassius; the left wing of the joint army of Brutus and Cassius. Brutus wants Cassius to attack the enemy at the same time that he himself does. In the next scene, Messala and his escort are met by Titinius coming from Cassius.

Let them set on at once ; for I perceive
But cold demeanour in Octavius' wing,
And sudden push gives them the overthrow.
Ride, ride, Messala : let them all come down. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.—*Another Part of the Field.*

Alarums. Enter CASSIUS and TITINIUS.

Cass. O, look, Titinius, look, the villains fly !
Myself have to mine own turn'd enemy.
This ensign here of mine was turning back ;
I slew the coward, and did take it² from him.

Tit. O Cassius, Brutus gave the word too early ;
Who, having some advantage on Octavius,
Took it too eagerly : his soldiers fell to spoil,
Whilst we by Antony are all enclosed.

Enter PINDARUS.

Pin. Fly further off, my lord, fly further off ;
Mark Antony is in your tents, my lord :
Fly, therefore, noble Cassius, fly far' off !

Cass. This hill is far enough.—Look, look, Titinius ;
Are those my tents where I perceive the fire ?

Tit. They are, my lord.

Cass. Titinius, if thou lovest me,
Mount thou my horse, and hide thy spurs in him,
Till he have brought thee up to yonder troops,³
And here again ; that I may rest assured
Whether yond troops are friend or enemy.

Tit. I will be here again, even with a thought. [Exit.

² *Ensign* was used, as it is still, either for the flag or for the bearer of it : here it is used for both at once. It was in killing the cowardly ensign that Cassius "to his own turn'd enemy."

³ "Yonder troops" are Messala and his escort coming from Brutus.

Cass. Go, Pindarus, get higher on that hill :⁴
 My sight was ever thick : regard Titinius,
 And tell me what thou notest about the field.—

[PINDARUS goes up.]

This day I breathèd first : time is come round,
 And where I did begin, there shall I end ;
 My life is run his compass.—Sirrah, what news ?

Pin. [Above.] O my lord !

Cass. What news ?

Pin. [Above.] Titinius is enclosèd round about
 With horsemen, that make to him on the spur :
 Yet he spurs on. Now they are almost on him.—
 Now, Titinius !—Now some 'light.⁵ O, he 'lights too :
 He's ta'en ; [Shout.] and, hark ! they shout for joy.

Cass. Come down ; behold no more.—
 O, coward that I am, to live so long,
 To see my best friend ta'en before my face !—

PINDARUS descends.

Come hither, sirrah :
 In Parthia did I take thee prisoner ;
 And then I swore thee, saving of thy life,
 That whatsoever I did bid thee do,
 Thou shouldst attempt it. Come now, keep thine oath ;
 Now be a freeman ; and with this good sword,
 That ran through Cæsar's bowels, search this bosom.
 Stand not to answer : here, take thou the hilts ;⁶
 And, when my face is cover'd, as 'tis now,
 Guide thou the sword.—Cæsar, thou art revenged,

⁴ Cassius is now on a hill : he therefore means a hill somewhat *higher* than that he is on.—Cassius was, *in fact*, what we now call *near-sighted*.

⁵ Some *alight*, or *dismount*.

⁶ *Hilts*, plural, for *hilt* was the common usage in the Poet's time. So too with *funerals*, later in this play.

Even with the sword that kill'd thee.⁷

[*Dies.*]

Pin. So, I am free ; yet would not so have been,
Durst I have done my will.—O Cassius !
Far from this country Pindarus shall run,
Where never Roman shall take note of him.

[*Exit.*]

Re-enter TITINIUS, with MESSALA.

Mess. It is but change,⁸ Titinius ; for Octavius
Is overthrown by noble Brutus' power,
As Cassius' legions are by Antony.

Tit. These tidings will well comfort Cassius.

Mes. Where did you leave him ?

Tit. All disconsolate,
With Pindarus his bondman, on this hill.

Mes. Is not that he that lies upon the ground ?

Tit. He lies not like the living. O my heart !

Mes. Is not that he ?

Tit. No, this was he, Messala,
But Cassius is no more.—O setting Sun,
As in thy red rays thou dost sink to night,
So in his red blood Cassius' day is set ;
The sun of Rome is set ! Our day is gone ;
Clouds, dews, and dangers come ; our deeds are done !
Mistrust of my success hath done this deed.

Mes. Mistrust of good success hath done this deed.
O hateful Error, Melancholy's child,
Why dost thou show to the apt thoughts of men
The things that are not ?⁹ O Error, soon conceived,
Thou never comest unto a happy birth,

⁷ It was a *dagger*, not a sword, that Cassius stabbed Cæsar with. But the same *weapon* is put for the same *owner* ; a common figure of speech.

⁸ That is, *interchange* of victory and defeat.

⁹ Cassius is said to have been of a highly choleric or bilious temperament ; as such, predisposed to melancholy, and hence apt to be taken with imaginary evils, or to construe things to the worst.

But kill'st the mother that engender'd thee !

Tit. What, Pindarus ! where art thou, Pindarus ?

Mes. Seek him, Titinius, whilst I go to meet
The noble Brutus, thrusting this report
Into his ears : I may say, thrusting it ;
For piercing steel and darts envenoméd
Shall be as welcome to the ears of Brutus
As tidings of this sight.

Tit. Hie you, Messala,
And I will seek for Pindarus the while.— [Exit MESSALA.
Why didst thou send me forth, brave Cassius ?
Did I not meet thy friends ? and did not they
Put on my brows this wreath of victory,
And bid me give it thee ? Didst thou not hear their shouts ?
Alas, thou hast misconstrued every thing !
But, hold thee, take this garland on thy brow ;
Thy Brutus bid me give it thee, and I
Will do his bidding.— Brutus, come apace,
And see how I regarded Caius Cassius.—
By your leave, gods : this is a Roman's part :
Come, Cassius' sword, and find Titinius' heart. [Dies.

Alarums. Re-enter MESSALA, with BRUTUS, young CATO,
STRATO, VOLUMNIUS, and LUCILIUS.

Bru. Where, where, Messala, doth his body lie ?

Mes. Lo, yonder, and Titinius mourning it.

Bru. Titinius' face is upward.

Cato. He is slain.

Bru. O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet !
Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords
In our own proper entrails.¹⁰ [Low alarums.

¹⁰ Brutus here strikes the proper key-note of the play. The matter is well stated by Mr. Froude: "The murderers of Cæsar, and those who had either instigated them secretly or applauded them afterwards, were included

Cato.

Brave Titinius !

Look, whâr he have not crown'd dead Cassius !

Bru. Are yet two Romans living such as these?—
Thou last of all the Romans, fare thee well !
It is impossible that ever Rome
Should breed thy fellow. — Friends, I owe more tears
To this dead man than you shall see me pay.—
I shall find time, Cassius, I shall find time.—
Come, therefore, and to Thassos send his body :
His funerals shall not be in our camp,
Lest it discomfort us.¹¹ — Lucilius, come ;—
And come, young Cato ; — let us to the field.—
Labeo and Flavius,¹² set our battles on :—
'Tis three o'clock ; and, Romans, yet ere night
We shall try fortune in a second fight.¹³

[*Exeunt.*]

in a proscription list, drawn by retributive justice on the model of Sulla's. Such of them as were in Italy were immediately killed. Those in the provinces, as if with the curse of Cain upon their heads, came one by one to miserable ends. In three years the tyrannicides of the Ides of March, with their aiders and abettors, were all dead; some killed in battle, some in prison, some dying by their own hand."

¹¹ So when he was come thither, after he had lamented the death of Cassius, calling him the last of all the Romans, being unpossible that Rome should ever breed again so noble and valiant a man as he, he caused his body to be buried, and sent it to the city of Thassos, fearing lest his funerals within his camp should cause great disorder. — PLUTARCH.

¹² These two men are not named among the persons of the drama, because they speak nothing. Labeo was one of the stabbers of Cæsar; and it is related that when he saw that all was lost, having dug his own grave, he enfranchised a slave, and then thrust a weapon into his hand to kill him.

¹³ The Poet very judiciously represents both battles as occurring the same day. They were *in fact* separated by an interval of twenty days.

SCENE IV.—*Another Part of the Field.*

Alarums. Enter, fighting, Soldiers of both Armies; then
BRUTUS, young CATO, LUCILIUS, and others.

Bru. Yet, countrymen, O, yet hold up your heads!

Cato. What bastard doth not?¹ Who will go with me?

I will proclaim my name about the field.—

I am the son of Marcus Cato, ho!

A foe to tyrants, and my country's friend;

I am the son of Marcus Cato, ho! [Charges the enemy.

Bru. And I am Brutus, Marcus Brutus, I;
Brutus, my country's friend; know me for Brutus!

[Exit, charging the enemy. Young CATO is over-powered, and falls.

Lucil. O young and noble Cato, art thou down?
Why, now thou diest as bravely as Titinius;

And mayst be honour'd, being Cato's son.²

1 Sold. Yield, or thou diest.

Lucil. Only I yield to die:
There is so much that thou wilt kill me straight;

[Offering money.

Kill Brutus, and be honour'd in his death.

1 Sold. We must not. A noble prisoner!

2 Sold. Room, ho! Tell Antony, Brutus is ta'en.

1 Sold. I'll tell the news. Here comes the general.—

Enter ANTONY.

Brutus is ta'en, Brutus is ta'en, my lord.

¹ Meaning, of course, "Who is such a bastard as not to do so?"

² There was the son of Marcus Cato slain, valiantly fighting among the lusty youth. For notwithstanding that he was very weary and over-harried, yet would he not therefore fly, but manfully fighting and laying about him, telling aloud his name, and also his father's name, at length he was beaten down amongst many other dead bodies of his enemies which he had slain round about him.—PLUTARCH.

Ant. Where is he?

Lucil. Safe, Antony ; Brutus is safe enough :
I dare assure thee that no enemy
Shall ever take alive the noble Brutus :
The gods defend him from so great a shame !
When you do find him, or alive or dead,
He will be found like Brutus, like himself.

Ant. This is not Brutus, friend ; but, I assure you,
A prize no less in worth : keep this man safe,
Give him all kindness ; I had rather have
Such men my friends than enemies. Go on,
And see whâr Brutus be alive or dead ;
And bring us word unto Octavius' tent
How every thing is chanced.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*Another Part of the Field.*

Enter BRUTUS, DARDANIUS, CLITUS, STRATO, and VOLUMNIUS.

Bru. Come, poor remains of friends, rest on this rock.

Cli. Statilius show'd the torch-light ; but, my lord,
He came not back : he is or ta'en or slain.¹

Bru. Sit thee down, Clitus : slaying is the word ;
It is a deed in fashion. Hark thee, Clitus. [Whispers him.

Cli. What, I, my lord ? No, not for all the world.

Bru. Peace then ! no words.

Cli. I'll rather kill myself.

¹ Brutus thought that there was no great number of men slain in battle ; and, to know the truth of it, there was one called Statilius that promised to go through his enemies, for otherwise it was impossible to go see their camp ; and from thence, if all were well, that he would lift up a torch-light in the air, and then return with speed to him. The torch-light was lift up as he had promised, for Statilius went thither. Now Brutus, seeing Statilius tarry long after that, said, " If Statilius be alive, he will come again." But his evil fortune was such that, as he came back, he lighted in his enemies' hands and was slain.—PLUTARCH.

Bru. Hark thee, Dardanius. [Whispers him.]

Dar. Shall I do such a deed?

Cl. O Dardanius!

Dar. O Clitus!

Cl. What ill request did Brutus make to thee?

Dar. To kill him, Clitus. Look, he meditates.

Cl. Now is that noble vessel full of grief,
That it runs over even at his eyes.

Bru. Come hither, good Volumnius; list a word.

Vol. What says my lord?

Bru. Why, this, Volumnius:

The ghost of Cæsar hath appear'd to me
Two several times by night; at Sardis once,
And, this last night, here in Philippi fields:
I know my hour is come.²

Vol. Not so, my lord.

Bru. Nay, I am sure it is, Volumnius.

Thou see'st the world, Volumnius, how it goes;
Our enemies have beat us to the pit: [Low alarums.]
It is more worthy to leap in ourselves
Than tarry till they push us. Good Volumnius,
Thou know'st that we two went to school together:
Even for that our love of old, I pr'ythee,
Hold thou my sword-hilts, whilst I run on it.

Vol. That's not an office for a friend, my lord.

[Alarums still.]

² So the Poet read in Plutarch: "The second battle being at hand, this spirit appeared again unto him, but spake never a word. Thereupon Brutus, knowing that he should die, did put himself to all hazard in battle, but yet fighting could not be slain."—Merivale has a strong sentence on this point: "The legend that when preparing for the encounter with the triumvirs he was visited by the ghost of Caesar, which summoned him to meet again at Philippi, marks the conviction of the ancients that in the crisis of his fate he was stung by guilty remorse, and haunted by the presentiment of final retribution."

Clit. Fly, fly, my lord ! there is no tarrying here.

Bru. Farewell to you ;— and you ;— and you, Volumnius.—

Strato, thou hast been all this while asleep ;
Farewell to thee too, Strato.—Countrymen,
My heart doth joy, that yet in all my life
I found no man but he was true to me.
I shall have glory by this losing day,
More than Octavius and Mark Antony
By their vile conquest shall attain unto.
So, fare you well at once ; for Brutus' tongue
Hath almost ended his life's history :
Night hangs upon mine eyes ; my bones would rest,
That have but labour'd to attain this hour.

[*Alarums.* *Cry within,* Fly, fly, fly !

Clit. Fly, my lord, fly !

Bru. Hence ! I will follow.³—

[*Exeunt* CLITUS, DARDANIUS, and VOLUMNIUS.

I pr'ythee, Strato, stay thou by thy lord :

Thou art a fellow of a good respect ;⁴

³ Volumnius denied his request, and so did many others ; and, amongst the rest, one of them said, there was no tarrying for them there, but that they must needs fly. Then Brutus, rising up, " We must fly indeed," said he, " but it must be with our hands, not with our feet." Then, taking every man by the hand, he said these words unto them with a cheerful countenance : " It rejoiceth my heart, that not one of my friends hath failed me at my need, and I do not complain of my fortune, but only for my country's sake : for, as for me, I think myself happier than they that have overcome, considering that I leave a perpetual fame of virtue and honesty, the which our enemies the conquerors shall never attain unto by force or money." Having so said, he prayed every man to shift for himself, and then he went a little aside with two or three only, among the which Strato was one, with whom he came first acquainted by the study of rhetoric. Strato, at his request, held the sword in his hand, and turned his head aside, and Brutus fell down upon it, and so ran himself through, and died presently.—PLUTARCH.

⁴ A fellow well esteemed, or of good reputation. See page 15, note 17.

Thy life hath had some smatch of honour in it :
Hold, then, my sword, and turn away thy face,
While I do run upon it. Wilt thou, Strato ?

Stra. Give me your hand first : fare you well, my lord.

Bru. Farewell, good Strato.—Cæsar, now be still :
I kill'd not thee with half so good a will.

[*He runs on his sword, and dies.*

Alarums. Retreat. Enter OCTAVIUS, ANTONY, MESSALA, LUCILIUS, and Army.

Oct. What man is that ?

Mes. My master's man.—Strato, where is thy master ?

Stra. Free from the bondage you are in, Messala :
The conquerors can but make a fire of him ;
For Brutus only overcame himself,
And no man else hath honour by his death.

Lucil. So Brutus should be found.—I thank thee, Brutus,
That thou hast proved Lucilius' saying true.

Oct. All that served Brutus, I will entertain them.⁵—
Follow, wilt thou bestow thy time with me ?

Stra. Ay, if Messala will prefer⁶ me to you.

Oct. Do so, good Messala.

Mes. How died my master, Strato ?

Stra. I held the sword, and he did run on it.

Mes. Octavius, then take him to follow thee,
That did the latest service to my master.

Ant. This was the noblest Roman of them all :
All the conspirators, save only he,
Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar ;
He only, in a general-honest thought
And common good⁷ to all, made one of them.

⁵ "I will take them into my service." So in *The Two Gentlemen*, ii. 4 :
"Sweet lady, entertain him for your servant."

⁶ *Prefer* was a common term for *recommending* a servant.

⁷ The force of *in* is, properly, continued over *common good*.

His life was gentle ; and the elements
So mix'd in him,⁸ that Nature might stand up
And say to the world, *This was a man !*

Oct. According to his virtue let us use him,
With all respect and rites of burial.
Within my tent his bones to-night shall lie,
Most like a soldier, order'd honourably.—
So, call the field to rest ; and let's away,
To part the glories of this happy day.

[*Exeunt.*]

⁸ Referring to the old doctrine of the four elements, as they were called, earth, water, air, and fire, the right mixing and tempering of which was supposed to be the principle of all excellence in Nature. The Poet has a number of allusions to the doctrine, which was a commonplace of the time. The sense of the word *elements* has so changed as to make the passage just as true to the ideas of our time, as it was to those of three hundred years ago. A rather curious fact.

Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
 And with such cozenage ; is't not perfect conscience
 To quit¹⁵ him with this arm ? and is't not to be damn'd,
 To let this canker of our nature come
 In further evil ?¹⁶

Hora. It must be shortly known to him from England
 What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short : the interim is mine ;¹⁷
 And a man's life's no more than to say *One*.
 But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
 That to Laertes I forgot myself ;
 For by the image of my cause I see
 The portraiture of his.¹⁸ I'll court his favours :¹⁹
 But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
 Into a towering passion.

Hora. Peace ! who comes here ?

Enter OSRIC.

Osric. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir.—[*Aside to HORATIO.*]

Dost know this water-fly ?²⁰

Hora. [*Aside to HAMLET.*] No, my good lord.

¹⁵ Here, as in many other places, to *quit* is to *requite*.

¹⁶ " Is it not a damnable sin to let this *cancer* of humanity proceed further in mischief and villainy ? " *Canker*, in one of its senses, means an eating, malignant sore, like a *cancer*. See vol. vii, page 87, note 42.

¹⁷ Hamlet justly looks forward to the coming of that news as the crisis of his task : it will give him a practicable twist on the King : he can then meet both him and the public with *justifying proof* of his guilt.

¹⁸ Hamlet and Laertes have lost each his father, and both have perhaps lost equally in Ophelia ; so that their cause of sorrow is much the same.

¹⁹ Hamlet means " I'll solicit his *good will*" ; the general meaning of *favours* in the Poet's time.

²⁰ In *Troilus and Cressida*, v. 1, Thersites says of Patroclus, " How the poor world is pestered with such *water-flies*, diminutives of Nature ! " As Johnson says, " A water-fly skips up and down upon the surface of the water without any apparent purpose or reason, and is thence the proper emblem of a busy trifler.

Ham. [Aside to HORATIO.] Thy state is the more gracious ; for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile : let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the King's mess.²¹ 'Tis a chough ; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Osric. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his Majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use ; 'tis for the head.

Osric. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold ; the wind is northerly.

Osric. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.

Osric. Exceedingly, my lord ; it is very sultry, — as 'twere — I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his Majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, this is the matter, —

Ham. I beseech you, remember²² —

[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.]

Osric. Nay, in good faith ; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to Court Laertes ; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences,²³ of very soft society and great showing : indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry ; for you shall

²¹ This is meant as a sarcastic stroke at the King for keeping such a finical sap-head near his person. Let even a biped puppy be rich, the lord or owner of large herds of cattle, and he shall be the King's bosom friend, and feed at his table. — *Chough* is a bird of the jackdaw sort ; and Osric is aptly so called because he chatters euphuistic jargon *by rote*.

²² When one takes off his hat in courtesy to another, courtesy requires that he should presently put it on again, and not stand with it in his hand. So here the full meaning is, "Remember your courtesy, and put on your hat." See vol. ii. page 74, note 9.

²³ In the affected phrase-making of this euphuist, *excellent differences* probably means *distinctive excellences*.

CRITICAL NOTES.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Page 7. *Enter FLAVIUS, MARULLUS, &c.* — In the original, the latter of these names is printed *Murellus*. So all through the play except in one instance, where it is *Murrellus*.

P. 8. Mar. *What trade, thou knave? thou naughty knave, what trade?* — The original prefixes “*Fla.*” to this speech; but the next two speeches prove, beyond question, that it belongs to Marullus. Corrected by Capell.

P. 8. *I meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters, but with awl.* — The original has “*but withal.*” Of course a quibble is intended between *all* and *awl*; and it is not clear which form ought to be used. As the quibble is addressed to the ear, it matters little. — Some have found fault with *tradesman's*, and Farmer proposed to read “*no trade, — man's matters, nor woman's.*” Walker observes, “*Surely this is at least a step to the right reading.*”

ACT I., SCENE 2.

P. 11. *Stand you directly in Antonius' way.* — Here, and generally, the name is printed *Antonio* in the original. And so with several other names, *Octavio*, *Flavio*, and *Claudio*. Perhaps this grew, as Steevens thought, from the players being more used to Italian than to Roman terminations.

P. 14. *No, Cassius; for the eye sees not itself*

But by reflection from some other thing. — The original reads “*by reflection, by some other things.*” Here *by* was doubtless repeated by mistake; and singulars and plurals were very often confounded. The first of these corrections was made by Pope; the other, by Walker.

P. 14. *That you have no such mirror as will turn
Your hidden worthiness into your eye.*—The old text has *mirrors* instead of *mirror*. Corrected by Walker.

P. 15. *Were I a common laugher, or did use
To stale with ordinary oaths my love*

To every new protester.—So Pope. Instead of *laugher*, the original has *Laughter*; which, after all, may possibly be right, in the sense of *laughingstock*. Mr. Daniel Jefferson, of Boston, proposes to me “a common *lover*”; and so, I have hardly any doubt, we ought to read. This would make *common* emphatic, and give it the sense of *indiscriminate* or *promiscuous*; which quite accords with the context.

P. 16. *Set honour in one eye, and death i' the other,
And I will look on death indifferently.*—So Theobald and Warburton. In the second of these lines, the original has *both* instead of *death*. With *both*, the paralogism is surely too glaring, even for so loose-knit a genius as Brutus.

P. 19. *When could they say, till now, that talk'd of Rome,
That her wide walls encompass'd but one man?*—The original has *walkes* instead of *walls*. Perhaps the error grew from *talk'd* in the preceding line. Corrected by Rowe.

P. 21. *As we have seen him in the Capitol,
Being cross'd in conference by some Senator.*—So Walker. The original has *Senators*.

P. 25. *Ay, if I be alive, and your mind hold, and your dinner worth
the eating.*—Walker says, “Surely, ‘and my mind hold?’ Your is absurd.” Perhaps so; but I do not quite see it.

*
ACT I., SCENE 3.

P. 27. *A common slave— you'd know him well by sight—
Held up his left hand, &c.*—The original reads “*you* know him,” &c. The correction was proposed by Dyce. The propriety of it is, I think, evident. See foot-note 6.

P. 28. *Against the Capitol I met a lion,
Who glared upon me, &c.*—The original has *glaz'd* instead of *glared*. Hardly worth noting, perhaps.

P. 28.

*When these prodigies
Do so conjointly meet, let not men say,*

These are their seasons ; they are natural. — So Collier's second folio, substituting *seasons* for *reasons*. Upon this reading Professor Craik comments thus : “*This is their season* might have been conceivable ; but who ever heard it remarked of any description of phenomena that *these are their seasons.*” Nevertheless I am pretty sure that similar phrases are current in common speech. And if any one were to say, “These parts of the year,” or, “these months of Spring, are just the *times*,” or “the *seasons* for such storms,” where would be the absurdity of it ? Besides, I do not see but that strict propriety of speech requires *this is their reason*, as much as *this is their season*.

P. 29.

You look pale, and gaze,

And put on fear, and case yourself in wonder, &c. — The old text has *cast* instead of *case*. The correction occurred independently to Mr. Swynfen Jervis and Mr. W. W. Williams, and is certainly favoured by the words *put on fear*. See foot-note 18.

P. 30. *Why old men fool, and children calculate.* — The original reads “Why Old men, Fooles, and Children calculate.” This makes the sense incoherent. The reading here adopted is coherent, and gives the right sense, — that old men in being foolish, and children in being considerate, are acting as much against nature as the fires and ghosts, the birds and beasts, are in what has just been related of them. The correction was proposed by Mitford. Lettsom says, “Read ‘old men fool,’ if this has not been noticed before.”

P. 30. *To make them instruments of fear and warning*

Unto some monstrous state. Now could I, Casca,

Name thee a man most like this dreadful night, &c. — So Capell. The original reads “Name to thee a man.”

P. 33. *And the complexion of the element*

Is favour'd like the work we have in hand,

Most bloody-fiery and most terrible. — In the second of these lines, the original has “*Is Favors, like the Worke,*” &c. Johnson’s reading, “*In Favour’s like,*” is commonly adopted ; but I prefer Capell’s. See foot-note 32. — In the third line, the old text has “*Most bloodie, fierie.*” The correction is Walker’s.

P. 33. *No, it is Casca ; one incorporate*

To our attempt.—So Walker. The old text has *Attempts*. The confusion of plurals and singulars is especially frequent in this play.

P. 33. *Good Cinna, take this paper,*

And look you lay it in the prætor's chair,

Where Brutus may best find it.—The original has “may but find it.” The correction was proposed by Professor Craik.

ACT II., SCENE I.

P. 36. *Is not to-morrow, boy, the Ides of March?*—The original reads “the *first* of March.” This evidently cannot be right, though it may be what the Poet wrote: for in Plutarch, *Life of Brutus*, North’s translation, he read as follows: “Cassius asked him if he were determined to be in the Senate-house the *first* day of the month of March, because he heard say that Cæsar’s friends should move the Council that day, that Cæsar should be called king by the Senate.” Nevertheless the whole ordering of dates in the play is clearly against the old reading; so that Theobald’s correction must be accepted.

P. 37. *My ancestor did from the streets of Rome*
The Tarquin drive, &c.—So Dyce. The original has “my *Ancestors*.” See page 19, note 36.

P. 37. *Speak, strike, redress ! — Am I entreated, then,*
To speak and strike?—So Pope. The old text lacks *then*, which is needful to the metre, and helpful to the sense.

P. 37. *Sir, March is wasted fourteen days.*—So Theobald. original has “*fifteene dayes*,” which cannot be right, as the Ides fell on the fifteenth of March, and this is the day before the Ides.

P. 38. *The genius and the mortal instruments*
Are then in Council ; and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, &c.—So the second folio. The original has “the state of *a* man.” Both sense and metre are evidently against this reading; and Walker points out many like instances of *a* interpolated.—I am all but certain that we ought to read *conflict* instead of *council*. See foot-note 16.

P. 39. *For if thou pass, thy native semblance on,*

Not Erebus itself were dim enough, &c. — The original reads “For if thou *path*,” &c. This has been defended by some, and several instances cited of the verb to *path*; but those instances are quite beside the mark, as they do not use the word in any such sense as would justify its retention here. Coleridge proposed *put*, Walker strongly approves it, and Dyce adopts it. This is certainly strong authority, still I cannot reconcile myself to such a use of *put*. Surely a man cannot be rightly said to *put on* his *native* looks; though he may well be said to *put* them *off*, or to *keep* them on. On the other hand, to *pass* may very well mean to *walk abroad*, or to *pass the streets*, which is the sense wanted here. Of course, with this reading, “thy native semblance on” is the ablative absolute; “thy native semblance *being on*.”

P. 41. *No, not an oath: if not the face of men,*

The sufferance of our souls, the time's abuse, &c. — There has been much stumbling at the word *face* here; I hardly know why. Warburton reads *fate*; Mason proposed *faith*, Malone *faiths*, which latter seems much the best of the three, as it would mean the *plighted faith* of the conspirators. See foot-note 24.

P. 43.

This shall mark

Our purpose necessary, and not envious. — So Collier's second folio. The original has *make* instead of *mark*. The former can only be explained “make our purpose *seem* necessary,” — a sense which the word will hardly bear, but which the context plainly requires.

P. 44.

Yet I do fear him;

For, in th' ingrafted love he bears to Cæsar. — So Pope. The original lacks *do*.

P. 45. *He loves me well, and I have given him reason.* — So Walker. The original has *Reasons* instead of *reason*. See foot-note 47.

P. 48.

And, upon my knees,

I charge you, by my once commended beauty, &c. — So Pope and Hanmer; Walker, also, says, “I think, *charge*.” The original has “I *charm* you.”

ACT II., SCENE 2.

P. 51.

*The things that threaten me
Ne'er look'd but on my back ; when they shall see*

The face of Cæsar, they are vanish'd. — The original has *threaten'd* instead of *threaten*, which seems fairly required by the context. Walker's correction.

P. 51. *Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds,
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol ;
The noise of battle hurtled in the air ;*

Horses did neigh, and dying men did groan ; &c. — In the first of these lines, the original has “*fight upon the clouds*,” and, in the last, “*Horses do neigh*,” — errors which the context readily corrects.

P. 52. *We are two lions litter'd in one day, &c.* — The original reads “*We heare two lions*.” Theobald changed *heare* to *were*; but *are* is evidently the right word ; and so Capell.

P. 53. *She dreamt to-night she saw my statua,*

Which, like a fountain, &c. — The original has *statue*. It appears that the word, though spelt *statue*, was sometimes used as trisyllable, *statuē*. But it is certain that the Latin form *statua* was often used till long after Shakespeare's time. See foot-note 5.

P. 53. *And these doth she apply for warnings and portents*

Of evils imminent ; &c. — So Hanmer. The original has “*And evils*” ; doubtless an accidental repetition of *And* from the line above.

ACT II., SCENE 4.

P. 56. *Enter ARTEMIDORUS.* — The original has “*Enter the Soothsayer*.” Rowe substitutes *Artemidorus*, and the change is thus justified by Tyrwhitt : “The introduction of the Soothsayer here is unnecessary, and, I think, improper. All that he is made to say should be given to Artemidorus ; who is seen and accosted by Portia on his passage from his first stand to one more convenient.”

P. 58. *None that I know will be, much that I fear may chance.*—Dyce suspects, as he well may, that the words *may chance* are “an interpolation.” Certainly both sense and metre would be better without them. Pope omits them.

ACT III., SCENE I.

P. 60 *If this be known,*

Cassius or Cæsar never shall turn back,

For I will slay myself.—White and Professor Craik substitute *on* for *or*; very injudiciously, I think. The change was proposed by Malone, with the remark that “the next line strongly supports this conjecture”; whereupon Ritson comments as follows: “He must mean, it is presumed, in the Irish way; as a mere English reader would conclude that the next line totally destroys it. Cassius says, if the plot be discovered, at all events either he or Cæsar shall never return alive; for, if the latter cannot be killed, he is determined to slay himself. The sense is as plain, as the alternative is just and necessary, or the proposed reading ignorant and absurd.”

P. 60. *Popilius Lena speaks not of our purpose.*—The original has *purposes*. But Cassius has just said, “I fear our *purpose* is discoveréd.” Corrected by Theobald.

P. 61. Casca. *Are we all ready?*—So Collier’s second folio. The original makes this question the beginning of Cæsar’s next speech. Ritson thought it should be given to one of the conspirators; and Cinna has just said, “Casca, you are *the first* that rears your hand.”

P. 61. *And turn pre-ordinance and first decree*

Into the play of children.—The original has *lane* instead of *play*; a very palpable blunder. The correction is Mason’s. Johnson proposed *law*, and several have adopted that reading. But what is “the *law* of children”? To be sure, *lane*, in manuscript, looks more like *law* than like *play*; but I do not see that this amounts to much.

P. 62. *Met.* Cæsar, thou dost me wrong.

Cæs. Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause,

Nor without cause will he be satisfied.—I here restore a genuine piece of the Poet’s text as preserved and authenticated to us by Ben Jonson. Instead of the three lines here quoted, the folio has only

a line and a half, thus: "Know, Cæsar doth not wrong, nor without cause will he be satisfied." Jonson, in his *Discoveries*, speaking of Shakespeare, has the following: "Many times he fell into those things could not escape laughter: as when he said in the person of Cæsar, one speaking to him, 'Cæsar, thou dost me wrong,' he replied, 'Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause,' and such like; which were ridiculous." Jonson's personal and professional relations with Shakespeare gave him every possible opportunity of knowing that whereof he speaks. But, as compared with his great friend, he was something of a purist in language; and his censure in this case has long seemed to me rather captious. At all events Shakespeare repeatedly uses *wrong*, both noun and verb, in the sense of to *hurt*, to *offend*, to *cause pain*. See foot-note 10. He seems to have been acquainted with the etymological relationship of *wrong*, *wring*, and *wrest*. In the text, Metellus uses *wrong* in the ordinary sense; Cæsar, in the sense of to *hurt*, to *wring*, or to *punish*. Besides, the passage, as it stands in the folio, carries in its face evident marks of mutilation: the words, "Cæsar doth not wrong," &c., come in abruptly, and without any proper occasion: hence Gifford justly supposed the Poet to have written as in the text. As given in the folio, the word *satisfied* also seems quite out of place; at least Cæsar has no apparent reason for using it. But, in the passage as censured by Jonson, that word comes in naturally, and in perfect dialogical order; the meaning being, "Cæsar did never *punish* without just cause, nor without cause will he be satisfied *in the matter of punishment*, or so as to revoke the sentence." How, then, came the passage to be as the folio gives it? This question of course cannot be definitely answered. As Jonson had some hand in getting up the folio, it is no-wise unlikely that he may have made the alteration; though it would seem as if he might have seen that the change just spoilt the Poet's dramatic logic. Or it may well be that the Editors, not understanding the two senses of *wrong*, struck out the words *but with just cause*, and then altered the language at other points in order to salve the metre. Either of these is, I think, much more probable than that Shakespeare himself made the change in order to "escape laughter." At all events, Jonson is better authority as to how Shakespeare wrote the passage, than the folio is, that Shakespeare himself made the change. — Such being the case, I can offer no apology for the reading given in the text. I have already cited Gifford's opinion in the matter. Halliwell has in substance expressed a like judgment. And Dr. Ingleby avows it as his conviction, that the line which Jonson and his fellow-censors "laughed

at was and is unimpeachable good sense, and that it is the editor's duty to use Jonson's censure for the purpose of correcting the folio reading."

P. 65. *Casca. Why, he that cuts off twenty years of life*

Cuts off so many years of fearing death.—Some modern editors transfer this speech to Cassius; but why? Surely it is more characteristic of Casca than of Cassius. And I am the more unwilling to take it from Casca, as it is the last he utters.

P. 65. *How many ages hence*

Shall this our lofty scene be acted o'er

In States unborn and accents yet unknown!—The original has *over* instead of *o'er*, and *State* instead of *States*. Walker says, "The flow requires *o'er*. *Over* for *o'er* is a frequent error of the folio." The other correction was made in the second folio.

P. 65. *That now on Pompey's basis lies along.*—So the second folio. The first has *lye* instead of *lies*.

P. 68. *To you our swords have leaden points, Mark Antony :*

Our arms in strength of amity, and our hearts

Of brothers' temper, do receive you in, &c.—The original reads, "Our armes in strength of *malice*"; from which no congruent sense can possibly be gathered. Many other changes have been made or proposed, the best of which hitherto given is, I think, Capell's, "our swords have leaden points, Our arms *no* strength of *malice*"; &c. But the logic and rhythm of the passage seem to require that the words "Our arms," &c., should be construed with what follows, not with what precedes; for which cause I have never been fully satisfied with Capell's reading. The reading in the text is Singer's. Collier has lately proposed "strength of *manhood*"; which seems to me exceedingly apt and happy; but *amity*, if not better in itself, involves less of literal change, and has more support from other passages of Shakespeare. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 6: "That which is the *strength of their amity* shall prove the immediate author of their variance."

P. 69. *And here thy hunters stand,*

Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy death.—So Pope, Theobald, and Collier's second folio. Instead of *death*, the original has *Lethee*, which is commonly printed *lethe*. Capell says that *lethe* here is "a term used by hunters, to signify the blood shed by a deer at its fall, with which it is still a custom to mark those who come in at the death."

P. 71. *And that we are contented Cæsar shall*

Have all due rites and lawful ceremonies.—So Pope, Walker, and Collier's second folio. The original has *true* instead of *due*.

P. 71. *Woe to the hands that shed this costly blood!*—The original has *hand* instead of *hands*. But Antony says to the stabbers a little before, “whilst your purpled *hands* do reek,” &c.

P. 71. *A curse shall light upon the limbs of men.*—It is quite amazing how much has been done, to help this innocent passage: as changes made and proposed, in order to get rid of *limbs*, we have *kind*, *line*, *loins*, *lives*, *times*, *tombs*, *sons*, and *minds*. If any change be necessary, I should say *souls*, which, beginning with the long *s*, might easily be misprinted *limbs*. But what need of change? See foot-note 38.

P. 72. *Passion, I see, is catching; for mine eyes,*

Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,

Begin to water.—The original has *from* instead of *for*, and *Began* instead of *Begin*; palpable errors, both.

ACT III., SCENE 2.

P. 75.

Cæsar's better parts

Shall now be crown'd in Brutus.—So Pope. The original lacks *now*.

P. 75. *Do grace to Cæsar's corpse, and grace his speech,*

Tending to Cæsar's glory.—The original has “Cæsar's *Glo-ries*.” Corrected by Walker. Brutus has just said “his *glory* not extenuated.”

P. 78. *If thou consider rightly of the matter,*

Cæsar has had great wrong.

3 Cit. *Has he not, masters?*—The original lacks *not*. Inserted by Professor Craik. Walker says, “Perhaps we should read ‘Has he, *my* masters?’”

P. 82. *For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth, &c.*—So the second folio. The first has *writ* instead of *wit*.

P. 84. *I heard 'em say, Brutus and Cassius
Are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome.* — The original reads “I heard him say.”

ACT III., SCENE 3.

P. 84. *I dreamt to-night that I did feast with Cæsar,
And things unlucky charge my fantasy.* — So Warburton. The original has *unluckily* instead of *unlucky*. Walker says, “undoubtedly *unlucky*.” See foot-note 1.

ACT IV., SCENE 1.

P. 87. *A barren-spirited fellow; one who feeds
On objects, arts, and imitations,
Which, out of use and staled, &c.* — Theobald and, after him, Dyce read “*abject orts* and *imitations*.” This is, to me, little less than shocking. It is true, Shakespeare uses both *abject* and *orts*; and I presume we all know the meaning of both those words: but is it credible that he could have been guilty of such a combination as *abject orts*? Besides, does not the word *imitations* show that he had in mind *works of art*? And why may not *objects* stand for any common objects of interest or curiosity? The Clarendon edition prints “*abjects, orts and imitations*”; which is certainly no improvement on Theobald’s reading. As to the objections urged against the old reading, I can but say they are to me only not quite so absurd as the changes they are made to cover. See foot-note 8.

P. 88. *Therefore let our alliance be combined,
Our best friends made, our means stretch’d out.* — So the first folio, with the exception of the word *out*. The second folio makes a full line, such as it is, thus: “Our best friends made, *and* our best means stretch’d *out*.” Neither reading is satisfactory, and modern editors are, I believe, about equally divided between the two.

ACT IV., SCENE 2.

P. 89. *Your master, Pindarus,*

In his own charge, or by ill officers, &c. — So Hanmer and Warburton. The old text has *change* instead of *charge*. The latter word, it seems to me, does not give the right sense; and we have many instances of *change* and *charge* misprinted for each other.

P. 90. *Lucius, do you the like; and let no man*

Come to our tent till we have done our conference. —

Lucilius and Titinius, guard the door. — Here, in the original, the names Lucius and Lucilius got shuffled each into the other's places ; and then, to cure the metrical defect in the third line, that line was made to begin with *Let.* Modern editors generally have rectified the metre of the first line by striking out *you*, — “Lucilius, do the like,” &c. But this leaves things quite wrong in regard to the persons ; for Lucilius is an officer of rank ; yet he is thus put to doing the work of what we call an orderly, while Lucius, the orderly, or errand-boy, is set in the officer's place. We are indebted to Professor Craik for rectifying this piece of disorder. — In the third line, the original reads “guard *our* door.” Probably an accidental repetition of *our* from the line above. Corrected by Rowe.

ACT IV., SCENE 3.

P. 91. *Whereas my letters, praying on his side*

Because I knew the man, were slighted off. — Instead of *Whereas*, the original has *Wherein*, which cannot easily be made to yield a fitting sense.

P. 91. *And let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself*

Are much condemn'd to have an itching palm. — So Capell. The original is without *And* at the beginning of the speech. Other editors have supplied *Yet*. Some such insertion is fairly required for the prosody.

P. 92. *I had rather be a dog, and bay the Moon,*

Than such a Roman.

Cass. *Brutus, bay not me, &c.* — Instead of the second *bay*, the original reads *baite*, which has the same meaning indeed ; but probably, as Dyce says, “the author intended Cassius to echo the word used by Brutus.” The correction is Theobald's.

P. 92. *I am a soldier, ay,*

Older in practice, abler than yourself, &c. — So Steevens. The original reads “I am a Souldier, *I*,” &c. The affirmative particle *ay* is there very often printed *I* ; and such I think is the case here ; for the repetition of the pronoun *I* seems awkward and unnatural.

P. 93. *For mine own part,*

I shall be glad to learn of abler men. — So Collier's second folio. The original has "of Nobler men." As Cassius has in fact used the word *abler*, there can, I think, be little scruple about the correction.

P. 95. *A flatterer's would not, though they did appear*

As huge as high Olympus. — So Collier's second folio. The original has "though they do appear."

P. 96. *Yes, Cassius; and henceforth,*

When you are over-earnest with your Brutus, &c. — The original reads "and from henceforth." Here *from* is palpably redundant both in metre and sense. Shakespeare probably wrote *from hence*, and then corrected the latter word into *henceforth*; and both got printed together. Capell omits *from*.

P. 101. *Come on refresh'd, new-aided, and encouraged.* — So Dyce and Singer. The original has *new added* instead of *new-aided*. Collier's second folio has "new-hearted?"

P. 101. *Lucius, my gown! — Farewell now, good Messala : —*

Good night, Titinius: &c. — The original is without *now*. Some such insertion is required for the metre. Hamner printed "Now, farewell," and Walker says, "Perhaps fare you well."

P. 102. *Varro and Claudius!* — Here, and again afterwards, in the text, as also in the stage-directions, the original has *Varrus* and *Claudio*. There is, I believe, no doubt that the right names are *Claudius* and *Varro*. As before noted, *Flavius* and *Octavius* are repeatedly misprinted *Flavio* and *Octavio*.

ACT V., SCENE I.

P. 108. *Whilst damnèd Casca, like a cur, behind*

Struck Cæsar on the neck. O flatterers! — The original has "O you Flatterers." Reasons of prosody caused *you* to be struck out long ago; but some recent editors restore it.

P. 110. *Be thou my witness that against my will,*

As Pompey was, I am compell'd to set

Upon one battle all our liberties. — The original inverts the order of *I am*. But "be witness that am I compell'd" is not an English construction. Corrected by Walker.

P. 110. *Coming from Sardis, on our foremost ensign*

Two mighty eagles fell ; &c. — Instead of *foremost*, the original has *former*, which is said to have been sometimes used in the sense of *foremost*. But the passage cited as proving such a usage seems to me irrelevant. The correction is Rowe's. See foot-note 16.

ACT V., SCENE 3.

P. 117. *Thou last of all the Romans, fare thee well !* — Instead of *Thou*, the original has *The*. The old abbreviations of *the* and *thou* were often confounded. Corrected by Rowe.

P. 117. *Come, therefore, and to Thassos send his body :*

His funerals shall not be in our camp,

Lest it discomfert us. — The original has *Thassus* for *Thassos*. Corrected by Theobald. Properly it should be *Thasos*; but North's Plutarch has it *Thassos*. — Some have changed *funerals* to *funeral*; also, in the next scene but one, *hilt*s to *hilt*. But *funerals* and *hilt*s are old forms of the singular in those words. See page 114, note 6.

ACT V., SCENE 4.

P. 118. *I'll tell the news. Here comes the general.* — The original reads “*Ile tell thee newes.*” Pope's correction.

ACT V., SCENE 5.

P. 121. *I shall have glory by this losing day,*

More than Octavius and Mark Antony

By their vile conquest shall attain unto. — The original reads “*By this vile conquest.*” Walker proposes *their*, and adds, “The repetition seems awkward and un-Shakespearian.”

HAMLET



HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

REGISTERED at the Stationers' on the 26th of July, 1602, as "The Revenge of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain's Servants." The tragedy was printed in 1603. It was printed again in 1604; and in the title-page of that issue we have the words, "enlarged to almost as much again as it was." This latter edition was reprinted in 1605, and again in 1611; besides an undated quarto, which is commonly referred to 1607, as it was entered at the Stationers' in the Fall of that year. These are all the issues known to have been made before the play reappeared in the folio of 1623. The quartos, all but the first, have a number of highly important passages that are not in the folio; while, on the other hand, the folio has a few, less important, that are wanting in the quartos.

It is generally agreed that the first issue was piratical. It gives the play but about half as long as the later quartos, and carries in its face abundant evidence of having been greatly marred and disfigured in the making-up. Dyce says, "It seems certain that in the quarto of 1603 we have Shakespeare's first conception of the play, though with a text mangled and corrupted throughout, and perhaps formed on the notes of some short-hand writer, who had imperfectly taken it down during representation." Nevertheless it is evident that the play was very different then from what it afterwards became. Polonius is there called Corambis, and his man Reynaldo is called Montano. Divers scenes and passages, some of them such as a reporter would be least likely to omit, are wanting altogether. The Queen is represented asconcerting and actively co-operating with Hamlet against the King's life; and she has an interview of considerable length with Horatio, who informs her of Hamlet's

escape from the ship bound for England, and of his safe return to Denmark; of which scene the later issues have no traces whatever. All this fully ascertains the play to have undergone a thorough recasting from what it was when the copy of 1603 was taken.

A good deal of question has been made as to the time when the tragedy was first written. It is all but certain that the subject was done into a play some years before Shakespeare took it in hand, as we have notices to that effect reaching as far back as 1589. That play, however, is lost; and our notices of it give no clue to the authorship. On the other hand, there appears no good reason for believing that any form of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was in being long before we hear of it as entered at the Stationers', in 1602.

Whether, or how far, Shakespeare may have borrowed his materials from any pre-existing play on the subject, we have no means of knowing. The tragedy was partly founded on a work by *Saxo Grammaticus*, a Danish historian, written as early as 1204, but not printed till 1514. The incidents, as related by him, were borrowed by *Belleforest*, through whose French version, probably, the tale found its way to the English stage. It was called *The History of Hamblet*. As there told, the story is, both in matter and style, uncouth and barbarous in the last degree; a savage, shocking tale of lust and murder, unredeemed by a single touch of art or fancy in the narrator. The scene of the incidents is laid before the introduction of Christianity into Denmark, and when the Danish power held sway in England: further than this the time is not specified. A close sketch of such parts of the tale as were specially drawn upon for the play is all I have room for.

Roderick, King of Denmark, divided his kingdom into provinces, and placed governors in them. Among these were two warlike brothers, Horvendile and Fengon. The greatest honour that men of noble birth could at that time win was by piracy, wherein Horvendile surpassed all others. Collere, King of Norway, was so moved by his fame that he challenged him to fight, body to body; and the challenge was accepted, the victor to have all the riches that were in the other's ship. Collere was

slain ; and Horvendile returned home with much treasure, most of which he sent to King Roderick, who thereupon gave him his daughter Geruth in marriage. Of this marriage sprang Hamblet, the hero of the tale.

Fengon became so envious of his brother, that he resolved to kill him. Before doing this, he corrupted his wife, whom he afterwards married. Young Hamblet, thinking he was likely to fare no better than his father, went to feigning himself mad. One of Fengon's friends, suspecting his madness to be feigned, counselled Fengon to use some crafty means for discovering his purpose. The plot being all laid, the counsellor went into the Queen's chamber, and hid behind the hangings. Soon after, the Queen and the Prince came in ; but the latter, suspecting some treachery, kept up his counterfeit of madness, and went to beating with his arms upon the hangings. Feeling something stir under them, he cried, “A rat, a rat !” and thrust his sword into them ; which done, he pulled the man out half dead, and made an end of him. He then has a long interview with his mother, which ends in a pledge of mutual confidence between them. She engages to keep his secret faithfully, and to aid him in his purpose of revenge ; swearing that she had often prevented his death, and that she had never consented to the murder of his father.

Fengon's next device was to send the Prince to England, with secret letters to have him there put to death. Two of his Ministers being sent along with him, the Prince, again suspecting mischief, when they were at sea read their commission while they were asleep, and substituted one requiring the bearers to be hanged. All this and much more being done, he returned to Denmark, and there executed his revenge in a manner horrid enough.

There is, besides, an episodical passage in the tale, from which the Poet probably took some hints, especially in the hero's melancholy mood, and his apprehension that “the spirit he has seen may be the Devil.” I condense a portion of it: “In those days the northern parts of the world, living then under Satan's laws, were full of enchanters, so that there was not any young gentleman that knew not something therein. And so Hamblet

had been instructed in that devilish art whereby the wicked spirit abuseth mankind. It toucheth not the matter herein to discover the parts of divination in man, and whether this Prince, by reason of his over-great melancholy, had received those impressions, divining that which never any had before declared." The "impressions" here spoken of refer to the means whereby Hamlet found out the secret of his father's murder.

It is hardly needful to add that Shakespeare makes the persons Christians, clothing them with the sentiments and manners of a much later period than they have in the tale; though he still places the scene at a time when England paid some sort of homage to the Danish crown; which was before the Norman Conquest. Therewithal the Poet uses very great freedom in regard to time; transferring to Denmark, in fact, the social and intellectual England of his own day.

We have seen that the *Hamlet* of 1604 was greatly enlarged. The enlargement, however, is mainly in the contemplative and imaginative parts, little being added in the way of action and incident. And in respect of those parts, there is no comparison between the two copies; the difference is literally immense. In the earlier text we have little more than a naked though in the main well-ordered and well-knit skeleton, which, in the later, is everywhere replenished and glorified with large, rich volumes of thought and poetry; where all that is incidental and circumstantial is made subordinate to the living energies of mind and soul.

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark.	MARCELLUS,	Officers.
HAMLET, Son of the former King.	BERNARDO,	
POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain.	FRANCISCO, a Soldier.	
HORATIO, Friend to Hamlet.	REYNALDO, Servant to Polonius.	
LAERTES, Son of Polonius.	A Captain. Ambassadors.	
VOLTIMAND,	The Ghost of Hamlet's Father.	
CORNELIUS,	FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway.	
ROSENCRANTZ,	Two Grave-diggers.	
GULDENSTERN,		
OSRIC, a Courtier.	GERTRUDE, Mother of Hamlet, and	
Another Courtier.	Queen.	
A Priest.	OPHELIA, Daughter of Polonius.	
Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Players, Sailors, Messengers, and Attendants.		

SCENE.—*Elsinore.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Elsinore. A Platform before the Castle.*

Francisco at his post. Enter to him Bernardo.

Bern. Who's there?

Fran. Nay, answer me: ¹ stand, and unfold yourself.

Bern. Long live the King!

Fran. Bernardo?

¹ Answer *me*, as I have the right to challenge *you*. Bernardo then gives in answer the watchword, " Long live the King ! "

Bern. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Bern. 'Tis now struck twelve ; get thee to bed, Francisco.

Fran. For this relief much thanks : 'tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.

Bern. Have you had quiet guard ?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Bern. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals ² of my watch, bid them make haste.

Fran. I think I hear them.—Stand, ho ! Who is there ?

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Hora. Friends to this ground.

Marc. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.³

Marc. O, farewell, honest soldier :

Who hath relieved you ?

Fran. Bernardo has my place.

Give you good night.

[*Exit.*]

Marc. Holla ! Bernardo !

Bern. Say,—

What, is Horatio there ?

Hora. A piece of him.

Bern. Welcome, Horatio ;—welcome, good Marcellus.

Hora. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night ?⁴

² *Rivals* are associates or partners. A brook, rivulet, or river, *rivus*, being a natural boundary between different proprietors, was owned by them in common ; that is, they were *partners* in the right and use of it. From the strifes thus engendered, the *partners* came to be *contenders* : hence the ordinary sense of *rival*.

³ This salutation is an abbreviated form of, "May God give you a good night" ; which has been still further abbreviated into, "Good night."

⁴ There is a temperate scepticism, well befitting a scholar, in Horatio's "has this *thing* appeared again to-night." *Thing* is the most general and indefinite substantive in the language. Observe the gradual approach to

Bern. I have seen nothing.

Marc. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us :
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us to watch the minutes of this night,
That, if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes,⁵ and speak to it.

Hora. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

Bern. Sit down awhile ;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What⁶ we two nights have seen.

Hora. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Bern. Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the pole⁷
Had made his course⁸ t' illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one,—

Marc. Peace, break thee off ; look, where it comes again !

Enter the Ghost.

Bern. In the same figure, like the King that's dead.

what is more and more definite. "Dreaded sight" cuts off a large part of the indefiniteness, and "this apparition" is a further advance to the particular. The matter is aptly ordered for what Coleridge calls "*credibilizing effect.*"

⁵ That is, *make good* our vision, or *prove* our eyes to be *true*. *Approve* was often thus used in the sense of *confirm*.

⁶ "With an account of what," is the meaning ; the language is elliptical.

⁷ Of course the *polar star*, or north star, is meant, which appears to stand still, while the other stars in its neighbourhood seem to revolve around it.

⁸ *His* for *its*, as usual. See vol. i. page 90, note 1.

Marc. Thou art a scholar ; speak to it, Horatio.⁹

Bern. Looks it not like the King ? mark it, Horatio.

Hora. Most like : it harrows¹⁰ me with fear and wonder.

Bern. It would be spoke to.¹¹

Marc. Question it, Horatio.

Hora. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form

In which the Majesty of buried Denmark

Did sometimes¹² march ? by Heaven I charge thee, speak !

Marc. It is offended.

Bern. See, it stalks away !

Hora. Stay ! speak, speak ! I charge thee, speak !

[*Exit Ghost.*

Marc. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Bern. How now, Horatio ! you tremble, and look pale :
Is not this something more than fantasy ?
What think you on't ?

Hora. Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

Marc. Is it not like the King ?

Hora. As thou art to thyself :
Such was the very armour he had on
When he th' ambitious Norway combated ;

⁹ It was believed that a supernatural being could only be spoken to with effect by persons of learning ; exorcisms being usually practiced by the clergy in Latin. So in *The Night Walker* of Beaumont and Fletcher : " Let's call the butler up, for he speaks Latin, and that will daunt the Devil."

¹⁰ To *harrow* is to *distress*, to *vex*, to *disturb*. To *harry* and to *harass* have the same origin. Milton has the word in *Comus* : " Amazed I stood *harrow'd* with grief and fear."

¹¹ *Would* and *should* were often used indiscriminately. I am not clear, however, whether the meaning here is, " It *wants* to be spoke to," or " It *ought* to be spoke to." Perhaps both.

¹² *Sometimes* and *sometime* were used indiscriminately, and often, as here, in the sense of *formerly*.

So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks¹³ on the ice.
'Tis strange.

Marc. Thus twice before, and jump¹⁴ at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hora. In what particular thought to work I know not ;
But, in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our State.¹⁵

Marc. Good now,¹⁶ sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject¹⁷ of the land ;
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war ;
Why such impress¹⁸ of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week.
What might be toward,¹⁹ that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day ?
Who is't that can inform me ?

Hora. That can I ;
At least, the whisper goes so.²⁰ Our last King,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,

¹³ *Polacks* was used for *Polanders* in Shakespeare's time. *Sledded* is *sledged*; on a sled or sleigh.—*Parle* is the same as *parley*.

¹⁴ *Jump* and *just* were synonymous in the Poet's time. So in Chapman's *May-day*, 1611: "Your appointment was *jump* at three with me."

¹⁵ Horatio means that, in a general interpretation of the matter, this fore-shadows some great evil or disaster to the State; though he cannot conceive in what particular shape the evil is to come.

¹⁶ "Good now" was often used precisely as the phrase "well now." Also, *good for well*. See vol. vii. page 9, note 1.

¹⁷ The Poet sometimes uses an adjective with the sense of the plural substantive; as here *subject* for *subjects*.—*Toils* is here a transitive verb.—*Mart*, in the next line but one, is *trade*.

¹⁸ *Impress* here means pressing or forcing of men into the service.—*Divide*, next line, is *distinguish*. Of course, *week* is put for *week-days*.

¹⁹ *Toward*, here, is *at hand*, or *forthcoming*. Often so used.

²⁰ That is, "so as I am going to tell you."

Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
 Thereto prick'd on²¹ by a most emulate pride,
 Dared to the combat ; in which our valiant Hamlet —
 For so this side of our known world esteem'd him —
 Did slay this Fortinbras ; who, by a seal'd compact,
 Well ratified by law and heraldry,²²
 Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
 Which he stood seized of²³ to the conqueror :
 Against the which, a moiety competent²⁴
 Was gagèd by our King ; which had return'd
 To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
 Had he been vanquisher ; as, by the same co-mart,²⁵
 And carriage of the article design'd,²⁶
 His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
 Of unimprovèd mettle²⁷ hot and full,

²¹ *Prick'd on* refers to Fortinbras ; the sense being, "by Fortinbras, *who was prick'd on* thereto."

²² "Law and heraldry" is the same as "*the law of Heraldry*" ; what is sometimes called "*the code of honour*." Private duels were conducted according to an established code, and heralds had full authority in the matter. The Poet has many like expressions. So in *The Merchant*, v. 1: "I was beset with shame and courtesy"; which means "*with the shame of courtesy*." Also in *King Lear*, i. 2: "This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter," &c.; "This policy, or *practice*, of reverencing age."

²³ This is the old legal phrase, still in use, for *held possession of, or was the rightful owner of*.

²⁴ *Moiety competent* is *equivalent portion*. The proper meaning of *moiety* is *half* ; so that the sense here is, half of the entire value put in pledge on both sides. — *Gaged* is *pledged*.

²⁵ *Co-mart* is *joint-bargain* or *mutual agreement* ; the same as *compact* a little before. So, in the preceding speech, *mart* for *trade*, or *bargain*.

²⁶ *Design'd* in the sense of the Latin *designatus* ; *marked out* or *drawn up*. *Carriage* is *purport* or *drift*.

²⁷ *Mettle*, in Shakespeare, is *spirit, temper, disposition*. — *Unimproved* is commonly explained *unimpeached, unquestioned* ; and so, it appears, the word was sometimes used. But it may here mean *rude, wild, uncultured* ; since Fortinbras, as "*like well to like*," may well be supposed of a somewhat *lawless* spirit.

Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,
Shark'd up²⁸ a list of lawless resolutes,
For food and diet, to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't ;²⁹ which is no other —
As it doth well appear unto our State —
But to recover of us, by strong hand
And terms compulsative, those foresaid lands
So by his father lost : and this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations,
The source of this our watch, and the chief head
Of this post-haste and romage³⁰ in the land.

Bern. I think it be no other but e'en so :
Well may it sort,³¹ that this portentoüs figure
Comes armèd through our watch ; so like the King
That was and is the question of these wars.

Hora. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy³² state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets :
So,³³ stars with trains of fire ; and dews of blood ;
Disasters in the Sun ; and the moist star,³⁴

²⁸ *Shark'd up* is *snapped up*, or *raked together* ; the idea being, that Fortinbras has gathered eagerly, wherever he could, a band of desperadoes, hard cases, or roughs, who were up to any thing bold and adventurous, and required no pay but their keep.

²⁹ *Stomach* was often used in the sense of *courage*, or appetite for danger or for fighting. See page 109, note 13.

³⁰ *Romage*, now spelt *rummage*, is used for ransacking, or making a thorough search.

³¹ *Sort*, probably, for *happen*, or *fall out*. Often so. The word was sometimes used for *suit*, *fit*, or *agree* ; which *may be* the sense here.

³² *Palmy* is *victorious* ; the *palm* being the old badge of victory.

³³ *So* is here equivalent, apparently, to *in like sort*, or *like manner*, and naturally draws in the sense of *there were* ; unless we choose to regard these words as understood. See Critical Notes.

³⁴ "The moist star" is the Moon ; so called, no doubt, either from the

Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday ³⁵ with eclipse :
And even the like precurse of fierce ³⁶ events —
As harbingers preceding still the fates,
And prologue to the omen ³⁷ coming on —
Have Heaven and Earth together demonstrated
Unto our climature ³⁸ and countrymen.
But, soft, behold ! lo, where it comes again !

Re-enter the Ghost.

I'll cross it, though it blast me. ³⁹ — Stay, illusion !
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me :
If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,
Speak to me :
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which happily foreknowing ⁴⁰ may avoid,
O, speak !

dews that attend her shining, or from her connection with the tides. — "Disasters in the Sun," is astrological, referring to the calamities supposed to be portended by certain aspects or conditions of that luminary.

³⁵ *Doomsday* is the old word for *judgment-day*. The meaning is that the Moon was sick almost unto death.

³⁶ The Poet repeatedly uses *fierce* in the general sense of *violent, swift, excessive, vehement*. So he has "*fierce vanities*," "*fierce abridgment*," and "*fierce wretchedness*." — *Precurse* for *precursor, forerunner*.

³⁷ *Omen* is here put for *portentous or ominous event*.

³⁸ *Climature* for *clime or climate*; used in a local sense.

³⁹ It was believed that a person crossing the path of a spectre became subject to its malignant influence. Lodge's *Illustrations of English History*, speaking of Ferdinand, Earl of Derby, has the following: "On Friday there appeared a tall man, *who twice crossed him swiftly*; and when the earl came to the place where he saw this man, he fell sick."

⁴⁰ Which *happy* or *fortunate foreknowledge* may avoid, a participle and adverb used with the sense of a substantive and adjective. — It was an old *superstition* that, if a man had "*devoured widows' houses*" or the portion of orphans, he could not lie quiet in his grave.

Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
 Extorted treasure in the womb of Earth,
 For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
 Speak of it : [Cock crows.]

stay, and speak ! — Stop it, Marcellus.

Marc. Shall I strike at it with my partisan? ⁴¹

Hora. Do, if it will not stand.

Bern. 'Tis here !

Hora. 'Tis here !

Marc. 'Tis gone ! [Exit Ghost.]

We do it wrong, being so majestical,
 To offer it the show of violence ;
 For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
 And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Bern. It was about to speak when the cock crew.

Hora. And then it started like a guilty thing
 Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
 The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
 Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
 Awake the god of day ; and at his warning,
 Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
 Th' extravagant and erring ⁴² spirit hies
 To his confine : ⁴³ and of the truth herein
 This present object made probation. ⁴⁴

Marc. It faded on the crowing of the cock.

⁴¹ Partisan was a halbert or pike ; a weapon used by watchmen.

⁴² Extravagant is extra-vagans, wandering about, going beyond bounds.
 Erring is erraticus, straying or roving up and down.

⁴³ Confine for place of confinement.— This is a very ancient belief. Prudentius has a hymn, *Ad Gallicinium*, which aptly illustrates the text :

Ferunt, vagantes Dæmonas,	Hoc esse signum præscii
Lætos tenebris Noctium,	Norunt re promissæ Spei,
Gallo canente exterritos	Qua nos soporis liberi
Sparsim timere, et cedere.	Speramus adventum Dei.

⁴⁴ Probation is proof, or the act of proving. Repeatedly so.

Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
 Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
 The bird of dawning singeth all night long :
 And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad ;
 The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike,
 No fairy takes,⁴⁵ nor witch hath power to charm ;
 So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Hora. So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
 But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
 Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill :⁴⁶
 Break we our watch up ;⁴⁷ and, by my advice,
 Let us impart what we have seen to-night
 Unto young Hamlet ; for, upon my life,
 This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
 Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
 As needful in our loves, fitting our duty ?

Marc. Let's do't, I pray ; and I this morning know
 Where we shall find him most conveniently. [*Exeunt.*]

⁴⁵ *Take* was used for *blast*, *infect*, or *smite with disease*. So in *King Lear*, ii. 4: "Strike her young bones, you *taking* airs, with lameness."—*Gracious* sometimes means *full of grace* or of the *Divine favour*.

⁴⁶ These last three speeches are admirably conceived. The speakers are in a highly kindled state; when the Ghost vanishes, their terror presently subsides into an inspiration of the finest quality, and their intense excitement, as it passes off, blazes up in a subdued and pious rapture of poetry.

⁴⁷ This, let the grammarians say what they will, is a clear instance of the first person plural, in the imperative mood. The same has occurred once before: "Well, *sit we down*, and *let us hear* Bernardo speak of this."

SCENE II.—*The Same. A Room of State in the Castle.*

Enter the King, the Queen, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green ; and that¹ it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe ;
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,
That we with wiser sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime² sister, now our Queen,
Th' imperial jointress³ of this warlike State,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—
With one auspicious and one dropping eye ;⁴
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole ;—
Taken to wife : nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along : for all, our thanks.⁵

¹ Instead of *that*, present usage would repeat *though*. But in such cases the old language in full was *though that, if that, since that, when that, &c.*; and Shakespeare, in a second clause, very often uses the latter word instead of repeating the first. See vol. i. page 85, note 1.

² *Sometime*, in the sense of *former* or *formerly*. See page 146, note 12.

³ *Jointress* is the same as *heiress*. The Poet herein follows the history, which represents the former King to have come to the throne by marriage; so that whatever of hereditary claim Hamlet has to the crown is in right of his mother.

⁴ The same thought occurs in *The Winter's Tale*, v. 2: "She had *one eye declined* for the loss of her husband, *another elevated* that the oracle was fulfill'd." There is an old proverbial phrase, "To laugh with one eye, and cry with the other."

⁵ Note the strained, elaborate, and antithetic style of the King's speech thus far. As he is there shamming and playing the hypocrite, he naturally tries how finely he can word it. In what follows, he speaks like a man, his

Now follows that you know :⁶ Young Fortinbras,
 Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
 Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
 Our State to be disjoint⁷ and out of frame,
 Colleaguèd⁸ with the dream of his advantage,
 He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
 Importing the surrender of those lands
 Lost by his father, with all bands⁹ of law,
 To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
 Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting,
 Thus much the business is : We have here writ
 To Norway, uncle of young Fontinbras,—
 Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
 Of this his nephew's purpose,— to suppress
 His further gait herein ; in that¹⁰ the levies,
 The lists, and full proportions, are all made
 Out of his subject.— And we here dispatch
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway ;
 Giving to you no further personal power
 To¹¹ business with the King, more than the scope
 Of these dilated articles allow.¹²

mind moving with simplicity and directness as soon as he comes to plain matters of business.

⁶ "Now follows that *which* you know *already*." *That* was continually used where we should use *what*.

⁷ *Disjoint* for *disjointed*. The Poet has many preterites so formed.

⁸ *Colleaguèd* does not refer to, or, as we should say, agree with *Fortinbras*, but with *supposal*, or rather with the whole sense of the three preceding lines. So that the meaning is, "his supposal of our weakness, or of our unsettled condition, *united* with his expectation of advantage."

⁹ *Band* and *bond* were the same, and both used for *obligation*.

¹⁰ *Gait* is *course, progress*; which is much the same as *walk*.— *In that* has the sense of *because* or *inasmuch as*. Often so.

¹¹ *To* was often thus used where we should use *for*. So a little before, in "taken *to* wife," and a little after in "bow them *to* your gracious leave."

¹² The scope of these articles when dilated or explained in full. Such

Farewell ; and let your haste commend your duty.

Corn. } In that and all things will we show our duty.
Volt. }

King. We doubt it nothing ; heartily farewell.—

[*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you ?

You told us of some suit ; what is't, Laertes ?

You cannot speak of reason¹³ to the Dane,

And lose your voice : what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,

That shall not be my offer, not thy asking ?

The head is not more native to the heart,

The hand more instrumental to the mouth,

Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.¹⁴

What wouldst thou have, Laertes ?

Laer. Dread my lord,

Your leave and favour to return to France ;

From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,

To show my duty in your coronation ;

Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,

My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,

And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave ? What says Polonius ?

Polo. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave

By laboursome petition ; and, at last,

Upon his will I seal'd my hard¹⁵ consent :

I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes ; time be thine,

elliptical expressions are common with the Poet. Modern grammar would require *allows* instead of *allow*. See page 108, note 7.

¹³ That is, cannot speak *what is reasonable*.

¹⁴ The various parts of the body enumerated are not more *allied, more necessary* to each other, than the King of Denmark is bound to your father to do him service.

¹⁵ *Hard* for *reluctant, difficult* ; like *slow* just before.

And thy best graces spend it at thy will !¹⁶—
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

Ham. [Aside.] A little more than kin, and less than kind.¹⁷

King. — How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Ham. Not so, my lord ; I am too much i' the sun.¹⁸

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

Do not for ever with thy vailèd lids¹⁹

Seek for thy noble father in the dust :

Thou know'st 'tis common ; all that live must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

Ham. Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen. If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee ?

¹⁶ "Take an auspicious hour, Laertes ; be your time your own, and thy best virtues guide thee in spending of it at thy will."

¹⁷ The King is "a little more than kin" to Hamlet, because, in being at once his uncle and his father, he is *twice* kin. And he is "less than kind," because his incestuous marriage, as Hamlet views it, is *unnatural* or *out of nature*. The Poet repeatedly uses *kind* in its primitive sense of *nature*. Professor Himes, however, of Gettysburg, Penn., questions this explanation, and writes me as follows : "It seems to me that, since Hamlet has just been addressed as cousin and as son, he is still the object of thought, and the words quoted must be referred by the Prince to himself, and not to the King. In other words, it is Hamlet who is 'a little more than kin, and less than kind.' If we take *kin* as a substitute for *cousin*, and *kind* as a substitute for *son*, Hamlet is a little more than the first, for he is nephew, and a little less than the second, for he is only a step-son. Hamlet's *aside* is thus a retort upon the King's words ; as though he said, 'I am neither the one nor the other,—a little more than the one, and not so much as the other.'"

¹⁸ Hamlet seems to have a twofold meaning here. First, he intends a sort of antithesis to the King's, "How is it that the clouds still hang on you?" Second, he probably alludes to the old proverbial phrase of being *in the sun*, or *in the warm sun*, which used to signify the state of being without the charities of home and kindred, — exposed to the social inclemencies of the world. Hamlet regards himself as exiled from these charities, as having lost both father and mother. See vol. iv. page 182, note 29.

¹⁹ With *downcast eyes*. To *vail* is to *lower*, to *let fall*.

Ham. Seems, madam ! nay, it is ; I know not *seems*.
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,
That can denote me truly : these, indeed, seem,
For they are actions that a man might play :
But I have that within which passeth show ;
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father :
But, you must know, your father lost a father ;
That father lost, lost his ; and the survivor bound,
In filial obligation, for some term
To do obsequious²⁰ sorrow : but to persevere
In obstinate condolment, is a course
Of impious stubbornness ; 'tis unmanly grief :
It shows a will most incorrect²¹ to Heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd :
For what we know must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we, in our peevish opposition,
Take it to heart ? Fie ! 'tis a fault to Heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd ; whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day,
This must be so. We pray you, throw to earth

²⁰ The Poet uses *obsequious* as having the sense of *obsequies*.

²¹ *Incorrect* is here used in the sense of *incurrigible*.

This unprevailing²² woe ; and think of us
 As of a father : for let the world take note,
 You are the most immediate to our throne ;
 And with no less nobility of love
 Than that which dearest father bears his son,
 Do I impart toward you.²³ For your intent
 In going back to school in Wittenberg,²⁴
 It is most retrograde to our desire ;
 And we beseech you, bend you to remain
 Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet :
 I pray thee, stay with us ; go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply :
 Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come ;
 This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
 Sits smiling to my heart : in grace whereof,
 No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell ;
 And the King's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,²⁵
 Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET.*

²² *Unprevailing* was used in the sense of *unavailing*.

²³ "Impart towards you," seems rather odd language, especially as *impart* has no object. The meaning probably is, "I take you into a partnership," or, "I invest you with a participation of the royal dignity, as heir-presumptive."—"Nobility of love" is merely a generous or heightened phrase for *love*. See Critical Notes.

²⁴ *School* was applied to places not only of academical, but also of professional study ; and in the olden time men were wont to spend their whole lives in such cloistered retirements of learning. So that we need not suppose Hamlet was "going back to school" as an undergraduate.

²⁵ A *rouse* was a deep draught to one's health, wherein it was the custom to empty the cup or goblet. Its meaning was the same as *carouse*. To *bruit* is to *noise* ; used with *again*, the same as *echo* or *reverberate*.

Ham. O, that this too-too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve²⁶ itself into a dew !
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter ! O God ! O God !
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world !
Fie on't ! O, fie ! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed ; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely.²⁷ That it should come to this !
But two months dead !— nay, not so much, not two :
So excellent a king ; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr ;²⁸ so loving to my mother,
That he might not beteem²⁹ the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and Earth !
Must I remember ? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on : and yet, within a month, —
Let me not think on't, — Frailty, thy name is woman ! —
A little month ; or e'er³⁰ those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears ;³¹ — why, she, even she —
O God ! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,³²

²⁶ *Resolve* in its old sense of *dissolve*. The three words *melt*, *thaw*, and *resolve*, all signifying the same thing, are used merely for emphasis.

²⁷ *Merely* in one of the Latin senses of *mere* ; *wholly*, *entirely*.

²⁸ *Hyperion*, which literally means *sublimity*, was one of the names of Apollo, the most beautiful of all the gods, and much celebrated in classic poetry for his golden locks. Here, as often, *to* has the force of *compared to*.

²⁹ *Beteem* is an old word for *permit* or *suffer*.

³⁰ *Or ever* was in common use for *before*, *sooner than*.

³¹ Niobe was the wife of Amphion, King of Thebes. As she had twelve children, she went to crowing one day over Latona, who had only two, Apollo and Diana. In return for this, all her twelve were slain by Latona's two ; and Jupiter, in pity of her sorrow, transformed her into a rock, from which her tears issued in a perennial stream.

³² *Discourse of reason*, in old philosophical language, is *rational discourse*,

Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
 My father's brother ; but no more like my father
 Than I to Hercules : within a month ;
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
 Had left the flushing³³ in her gallèd eyes,
 She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets !
 It is not, nor it cannot come to, good :
 But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue !

Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.

Hora. Hail to your lordship !

Ham. I'm glad to see you well :
 Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

Hora. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

Ham. Sir, my good friend ; I'll change that name with
 you :³⁴

And what make you³⁵ from Wittenberg, Horatio ? —
 Marcellus ?

Marc. My good lord,—

Ham. I'm very glad to see you.—[*To BERN.*] Good
 even, sir.³⁶—

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg ?

or *discursive* reason ; the faculty of pursuing a train of thought, or of passing from thought to thought in the way of inference or conclusion.

³³ Shakespeare has *leave* repeatedly in the sense of *leave off*, or *cease*. *Flushing* is the redness of the eyes caused by what the Poet elsewhere calls "eye-offending brine."

³⁴ As if he had said, "No, not my poor servant : we are *friends* ; that is the style I will exchange with you."

³⁵ "What *make* you ?" is old language for "What *do* you ?"

³⁶ The words, *Good even, sir*, are evidently addressed to Bernardo, whom Hamlet has not before known ; but, as he now meets him in company with old acquaintances, like a true gentleman, he gives him a salutation of kindness.—Marcellus has said before of Hamlet, "I this *morning* know where we shall find him." But *good even* was the common salutation after noon.

Hora. A truant disposition, good my lord.

Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so ;
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself : I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore ?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

Hora. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student ;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Hora. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

Ham. Thrift, thrift,³⁷ Horatio ! the funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest³⁸ foe in Heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio !
My father, — methinks I see my father.

Hora. O, where, my lord ?

Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hora. I saw him once ; he was a goodly king.

Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

Hora. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw who ?

Hora. My lord, the King your father.

Ham. The King my father !

Hora. Season your admiration³⁹ for a while
With an attentive ear, till I deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

³⁷ *Thrift* means *economy* : all was done merely to save cost.

³⁸ In Shakespeare's time *dearest* was applied to any person or thing that excites the liveliest interest, whether of love or hate. See page 69, note 32.

³⁹ *Admiration* in the Latin sense of *wonder* or *astonishment*. — *Season* is *qualify* or *temper*.

Ham. For God's love, let me hear.

Hora. Two nights together had these gentlemen, Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch, In the dead vast⁴⁰ and middle of the night, Been thus encounter'd : A figure like your father, Arm'd at all points, exactly, cap-a-pie, Appears before them, and with solemn march Goes slow and stately by them : thrice he walk'd By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes, Within his truncheon's length ; whilst they, distill'd Almost to jelly with the act of fear,⁴¹ Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me In dreadful secrecy impart they did ; And I with them the third night kept the watch : Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time, Form of the thing, each word made true and good, The apparition comes. I knew your father ; These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this ?

Marc. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

Ham. Did you not speak to it ?

Hora. My lord, I did ; But answer made it none : yet once methought It lifted up its head, and did address Itself to motion, like as it would speak ; But even then the morning cock crew loud, And at the sound it shrunk in haste away, And vanish'd from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

⁴⁰ *Vast* is *void* or *vacancy*. So in *The Tempest*, i. 2: "Urchins shall, for that *vast* of night that they may work," &c.

⁴¹ To *distill* is to fall in drops, to melt ; so that *distill'd* is a very natural and fit expression for the cold sweat caused by intense fear. "The *act* of fear" is the *action* or the *effect* of fear.

Hora. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true ;
 And we did think it writ down in our duty
 To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
 Hold you the watch to-night ?

Marc. }
Bern. }

We do, my lord.

Ham. Arm'd, say you ?

Marc. }
Bern. } Arm'd, my lord.

Ham. From top to toe ?

Marc. }
Bern. }

My lord, from head to foot.

Ham. Then saw you not his face ?

Hora. O, yes, my lord ; he wore his beaver up.⁴²

Ham. What, look'd he frowningly ?

Hora. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

Ham. Pale, or red ?

Hora. Nay, very pale.

Ham. And fix'd his eyes upon you ?

Hora. Most constantly.

Ham. I would I had been there.

Hora. It would have much amazed you.

Ham. Very like, very like. Stay'd it long ?

Hora. While one with moderate haste might tell⁴³ a hundred.

Marc. }
Bern. } Longer, longer.

Hora. Not when I saw't.

Ham. His beard was grizzled ? — no ?

Hora. It was, as I have seen it in his life,

⁴² The beaver was a movable part of the helmet, which could be drawn down over the face or pushed up over the forehead.

⁴³ To tell was continually used for to count.

A sable silver'd.

Ham. I will watch to-night ;
Perchance 'twill walk again.

Hora. I warrant it will.
Ham. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though Hell itself should gape,
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable⁴⁴ in your silence still ;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue :
I will requite your loves. So, fare ye well :
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your Honour.

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you ; farewell.—

[*Exeunt HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.*

My father's spirit in arms ! all is not well ;
I doubt⁴⁵ some foul play : would the night were come !
Till then sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Same. A Room in POLONIUS'S House.*

*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*¹

Laer. My necessaries are embark'd ; farewell :
And, sister, as the winds give benefit,

⁴⁴ *Tenable for retained.* The Poet has many like instances of confusion of forms ; as *admired* for *admirable*, that is, *wonderful*, in *Macbeth*, iii. 4 : "Broke the good meeting with most *admired* disorder."

⁴⁵ *Doubt* in the sense of *fear* or *suspect*. Repeatedly so.

¹ This scene must be regarded as one of Shakespeare's lyric movements in the play, and the skill with which it is interwoven with the dramatic parts is peculiarly "an excellence with our Poet. *You experience the sensation of a pause, without the sense of a stop.*"—COLERIDGE.

And convoy² is assistant, do not sleep
But let me hear from you.³

Ophe. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood ;
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and supplyance of a minute ;⁴
No more.

Ophe. No more but so ?

Laer. Think it no more :⁵
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews⁶ and bulk ; but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal.⁷ Perhaps he loves you now ;
And now no soil nor cautel⁸ doth besmirch
The virtue of his will : but you must fear ;
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own ;
For he himself is subject to his birth :⁹
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself ; for on his choice depends
The safety and the health of the whole State ;

² *Convoy* for *conveyance*. Communication with France being by sea, there needed both a ship to carry letters, and a wind to drive the ship.

³ That is, "without letting me hear from you." The Poet repeatedly uses *but* in this way. See vol. vii. page 34, note 89.

⁴ A mere pastime, to *supply* or *fill up* the passing hour ; a sweet play, to beguile the present idle time. Instead of *supplyance*, the Poet elsewhere has *suppliment* in much the same sense.

⁵ "Take for granted that such is the case, till you have clear proof to the contrary." — *Crescent* is growing, increasing.

⁶ *Thews* for *sinews* or *muscles*. See page 31, note 23.

⁷ The idea is, that Hamlet's love is but a youthful fancy, which, as his mind comes to maturity, he will outgrow. The passage would seem to infer that the Prince is not so old as he is elsewhere represented to be.

⁸ *Cautel* is a debauched relation of *caution*, and means *fraud* or *deceit*.

⁹ Subject to the *conditions* which his birth entails upon him.

And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head.¹⁰ Then, if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed ;¹¹ which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs ;¹²
Or lose your heart ; or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister ;
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
Th' unchariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the Moon :
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes :
The canker galls the infants of the Spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed ;¹³
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary, then ; best safety lies in fear :
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Ophe. I shall th' effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors¹⁴ do,

¹⁰ His choice must be limited by the approval or consent of the nation.

¹¹ So far only as he, in his public and official character, shall make his promise good.

¹² " If with too credulous ear you *listen* to his songs."

¹³ In Shakespeare's time, *canker* was often used of the worm that kills the early buds before they open out into flowers. Perhaps it here means a rust that sometimes infests plants, and *eats* out their life.—*Buttons* is *buds*, and *disclose* is used in the sense of *open* or *unfold*.

¹⁴ Pastors that *have not the grace* to practice what they preach.

Show me the steep and thorny way to Heaven,
Whilst, like a puf'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own read.¹⁵

Laer. O, fear me not.
I stay too long: but here my father comes.—

Enter POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace ;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Polo. Yet here, Laertes? aboard, aboard, for shame !
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There ; my blessing with thee !

Laying his hand on LAERTES' head.

And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character.¹⁶ Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.¹⁷
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.¹⁸
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel ;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrâde.¹⁹ Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel ; but, being in,
Bear't that th' opposèd may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice :
Take each man's censure,²⁰ but reserve thy judgment
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy :

15 *Regards not his own lesson.*

16 To *character* is to engrave or imprint.

¹⁷ Unproportion'd for unhandsome or unfitting. His, again, for its,

¹⁸ *Vulgar* is here used in its old sense of *common*.

¹⁹ "Do not blunt thy feeling by taking every new acquaintance by the hand, or by admitting him to the intimacy of a friend."

²⁰ *Censure* was continually used for *opinion*, or *judgment*.

For the apparel oft proclaims the man ;
 And they in France of the best rank and station
 Are most select and generous, chief in that.²¹
 Neither a borrower nor a lender be :
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend ;
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
 This above all : To thine own self be true ;
 And it must follow, as the night the day,
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.²²
 Farewell ; my blessing season²³ this in thee !

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Polo. The time invites you ; go, your servants tend.

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia ; and remember well

²¹ That is, most select and generous, but chiefly or especially so in the matter of dress.

²² This is regarded by many as a very high strain of morality. I cannot see it so ; though, to be sure, it is as high as Polonius can go : it is the height of worldly wisdom,—a rule of being wisely selfish. In the same sense, "honesty is the best policy" ; but no truly honest man ever acts on that principle. A *passion* for rectitude is the only thing that will serve. It is indeed true that we have duties, indispensable duties, to ourselves ; that a man ought to be wise for himself. But that the being wise for one's self is the first and highest duty, I do not believe. And the man who makes that the first principle of morality never will and never can be truly wise for himself. Such, however, is the first principle of Polonius's morality ; and it is in perfect keeping with the whole of his thoroughly selfish and sinister mind. But he just loses himself by acting upon it. Aiming first of all to be true to himself, he has been utterly false to himself and to his family. Faith, or allegiance, to stand secure, must needs fasten upon something out of and above self. If Polonius had said, "Be true to God, to your country, or to your kind, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false unto thyself," he would have uttered a just and noble thing ; but then it would have been quite out of character, and in discord with the whole tenour of his speech. And the old wire-puller, with his double-refined ethics of selfishness, has nothing venerable about him ; while the baseness of Laertes seems to me the legitimate outcome of such moral teachings as these contained so pithily in his father's benediction.

²³ *Season* is here used, apparently, in the sense of *ingrain* ; the idea being that of so *steeping* the counsel into his mind that it will not fade out.

What I have said to you.

Ophe. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell.

Exit.

Polo. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

Ophe. So please you, something touching the Lord Ham-
let.

Polo. Marry, well bethought.

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you ; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous.

If it be so, — as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution, — I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.
What is between you? give me up the truth.

Ophe. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

Polo. Affection ! pooh ! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted²⁴ in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his — *tenders*, as you call them ?

Ophe. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Polo. Marry, I'll teach you : think yourself a baby ;
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly ;²⁵
Or — not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus²⁶ — you'll tender me a fool.

Ophe. My lord, he hath impörtuned me with love
In honourable fashion ; —

²⁴ *Unsifted* is *untried, inexperienced*. We still speak of *sifting* a matter.

²⁵ Polonius is using *tender* in different senses ; first in a business or financial sense, as in the phrase "legal tender" ; then in the sense of being careful of a thing, or of holding it precious or dear.

²⁶ Polonius is likening the phrase to a poor nag, which, if run too hard, will be *wind-broken*.

Polo. Ay, *fashion* you may call't; go to, go to.

Ophe. —And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,

With almost all the holy vows of Heaven.

Polo. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks.²⁷ I do know, When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter, Giving more light than heat, extinct in both, Even in their promise, as it is a-making, You must not take for fire. From this time Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence; Set your entreatments at a higher rate Than a command to parley.²⁸ For Lord Hamlet, Believe so much in him, that he is young; And with a larger tether²⁹ may he walk Than may be given you. In few,³⁰ Ophelia, Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,³¹ Not of that dye which their investments show, But mere implorators of unholy suits, Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,³² The better to beguile. This is for all: I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth

²⁷ This was a proverbial phrase. There is a collection of epigrams under that title; the woodcock being accounted a witless bird, from a vulgar notion that it had no brains. "Springes to catch woodcocks" means arts to entrap simplicity. *Springe* is, properly, *snare* or *trap*.—*Blood*, in the next line, is put for *passion*. Often so.

²⁸ Be more difficult of access, and let the *suits to you* for that purpose be of higher respect than a command to talk or chat.

²⁹ A *longer line*; a horse, fastened by a string to a stake, is *tethered*.

³⁰ In few *words*; in *short*.

³¹ *Brokers*, as the word is here used, are *go-betweens*, or *panders*; the same as *bawds*, a little after.

³² This joining of words that are really contradictory, or qualifying of a noun with adjectives that literally quench it, sometimes gives great strength of expression. See vol. v. page 34, note 6.

Have you so slander³³ any moment's leisure
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you: come your ways.

Ophe. I shall obey, my lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Same. A Platform before the Castle.*

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

Ham. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

Hora. It is a nipping and an eager¹ air.

Ham. What hour now?

Hora. I think it lacks of twelve.

Marc. No, it is struck.

Hora. Indeed? I heard it not: then it draws near the season

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off, within.*
What does this mean, my lord?

Ham. The King doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,²
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;³
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

Hora. Is it a custom?

Ham. Ay, marry, is't;
But to my mind, though I am native here

³³ That is, so disgrace, or misuse, as to *cause* slander.

¹ *Eager* was used in the sense of the French *aigre*, sharp, biting.

² To *wake* is to *hold a late revel* or *debauch*. A *rouse* is what we now call a *bumper*.—*Wassail* originally meant a drinking to one's health; hence it came to be used for any festivity of the bottle and the bowl.

³ Reels through the swaggering *up-spring*, which was the name of a rude, boisterous German dance, as appears from a passage in Chapman's *Alphonsus*: "We Germans have no changes in our dances; an almain and an *up-spring*, that is all."

And to the manner born, it is a custom
 More honour'd in the breach than the observance.
 This heavy-headed revel East and West ⁴
 Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations :
 They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
 Soil our addition ; ⁵ and indeed it takes
 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.⁶
 So, oft it chances in particular men,⁷
 That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As in their birth, — wherein they are not guilty,
 Since nature cannot choose his origin ; —
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason ;⁸
 Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
 The form of plausible ⁹ manners ; — that these men, —

⁴ The sense of *east and west* goes with what follows, not what precedes : "brings reproach upon us in all directions." To *tax* was often used so.

⁵ *Clepe* is an old Saxon word for *call*. — The Poet often uses *addition* for *title* ; so that the meaning is, they sully our title by likening us to swine. The character here ascribed to the Danes appears to have had a basis of fact. Heywood, in his *Drunkard Opened*, 1635, speaking of "the vinosity of nations," says the Danes have made profession thereof from antiquity, and are the first upon record "that have brought their wassel bowls and elbow-deep healths into this land."

⁶ That is, of our *reputation*, or of what *is attributed* to us.

⁷ Hamlet is now wrought up to the highest pitch of expectancy ; his mind is sitting on thorns ; and he seeks relief from the pain of that over-intense feeling by launching off into a strain of general and abstract reflection. His state of mind, distracted between his eager anticipation and his train of thought, aptly registers itself in the irregular and broken structure of his language.

⁸ The idea is, of some native aptitude indulged and fostered too much, so that it breaks down the proper guards and strongholds of reason. Here, as in some other cases, *pales* is *palings*. And *complexion* was often used, as here, to signify any constitutional *texture*, *aptitude*, or *predisposition*.

⁹ *Plausible* for *approvable*, or that which is to be applauded ; the active form with the passive sense. This indiscriminate use of active and passive forms was very common. See vol. iv. page 24, note xi.

Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,¹⁰—
 Their virtues else—be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo—
 Shall in the general censure take corruption
 From that particular fault; the dram of leav'n
 Doth all the noble substance of 'em sour,
 To his own scandal;¹¹—

Hora.

Look, my lord, it comes!

Enter the Ghost.

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!—
 Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd;
 Bring with thee airs from Heaven or blasts from Hell;
 Be thy intents wicked or charitable;
 Thou comest in such a questionable¹² shape,
 That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
 King, father: royal Dane, O, answer me!
 Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell

¹⁰ Alluding to the old astrological notion, of a man's character or fortune being determined by the star that was in the ascendant on the day of his birth.—*Livery* is properly a *badge-dress*; here put for a man's *distinctive idiom*.—Note the change of the subject from *these men* to *their virtues*.

¹¹ *His*, again, for *its*, referring to *substance*, or, possibly, to *leav'n*. Of course 'em refers to *virtues*. So that the meaning is, that the dram of leaven sours all the noble substance of their virtues, insomuch as to bring reproach and scandal on that substance itself. The Poet seems to have had in mind Saint Paul's saying, *1 Corinthians*, v. 6: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." And so in Bacon's *Henry the Seventh*: "And, as a little leaven of new distaste doth commonly sour the whole lumpe of former merites, the King's wit began now to suggest unto his passion," &c. This is said in reference to Sir William Stanley, whose prompt and timely action gained the victory of Bosworth Field. Some years after, he became a suitor for the earldom of Chester; whereupon, as Bacon says, "his suit did end not only in a denial, but in a *distaste*" on the part of the King. See Critical Notes

¹² "A *questionable shape*" is a shape that may be *questioned*, or *conversed with*. In like manner the Poet often uses *question* for *conversation*.

Why thy canónized bones, hearsèd in death,
 Have burst their cerements ;¹³ why the sepulchre,
 Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,
 Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,
 To cast thee up again ! What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corse, again, in cómplete steel,
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the Moon,
 Making night hideous ; and we fools of Nature
 So horridly to shake our disposition
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls ?¹⁴
 Say, why is this ? wherefóre ? what should we do ?

[*Ghost beckons HAMLET.*

Hora. It beckons you to go away with it,
 As if it some impartment did desire
 To you alone.

Marc. Look, with what courteous action
 It waves you to a more removèd ground :
 But do not go with it.

Hora. No, by no means.

Ham. It will not speak ; then I will follow it.

Hora. Do not, my lord.

Ham. Why, what should be the fear ?
 I do not set my life at a pin's fee ;
 And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
 Being a thing immortal as itself ?
 It waves me forth again ; I'll follow it.

Hora. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,

¹³ *Canonized* means made sacred by the *canonical* rites of sepulture.—*Cerements* is a dissyllable. It is from a Latin word meaning *wax*, and was so applied from the use of wax or pitch in sealing up coffins or caskets.

¹⁴ “We fools of Nature,” in the sense here implied, is, we who cannot by nature know the mysteries of the supernatural world. Strict grammar would require *us* instead of *we*.—The general idea of the passage seems to be, that man's intellectual eye is not strong enough to bear the unmuffled light of eternity.

Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
 That beetles o'er his base¹⁵ into the sea,
 And there assume some other horrible form,
 Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,¹⁶
 And draw you into madness?¹⁷ think of it :
 The very place puts toys¹⁸ of desperation,
 Without more motive, into every brain
 That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
 And hears it roar beneath.

Ham. It waves me still.—
 Go on ; I'll follow thee.

Marc. You shall not go, my lord.

Ham. Hold off your hands !

Hora. Be ruled ; you shall not go.

Ham. My fate cries out,
 And makes each petty artery¹⁹ in this body
 As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve. [Ghost beckons.
 Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen ;

[*Breaking from them.*
 By Heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets²⁰ me !
 I say, away !—Go on ; I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET.*

Hora. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Marc. Let's follow ; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

Hora. Have after. To what issue will this come ?

¹⁵ Overhangs its base. So in Sidney's *Arcadia* : "Hills lift up their beetle brows, as if they would overlooke the pleasantnesse of their under prospect."

¹⁶ To "deprive your sovereignty of reason" is to *depose* your *government* of reason, or take it away. The word was often used thus.

¹⁷ It was anciently believed that evil spirits sometimes assumed the guise of deceased persons, to draw men into madness and suicide, as is here apprehended of the Ghost.

¹⁸ *Toys* is *freaks*, *whims*, or *fancies*, here meaning any sudden mad impulse to suicide.

¹⁹ *Artery*, *nerve*, and *sinew* were used interchangeably in the Poet's time.

²⁰ The old *let*, now obsolete, meaning to *hinder*.

could this be sort of idea
 of what to happen to
 Hamlet ? madness ?

Marc. Something is rotten in the State of Denmark.

Hora. Heaven will direct it.

Marc. Nay,²¹ let's follow him. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.—*Another Part of the Platform.*

Enter the Ghost and HAMLET.

Ham. Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Ham. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come,

When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames

Must render up myself.

Ham. Alas, poor Ghost!

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

Ham. Speak; I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Ham. What?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit;
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,¹
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;
Thy knotted and combinèd locks to part,

²¹ *Nay* refers to Horatio's "Heaven will direct it," and means, "let us not leave it to Heaven, but look after it ourselves."

¹ Chaucer in the *Persones Tale* says, "The misese of hell shall be *in de- faute of mete and drinke.*" So, too, in *The Wyll of the Devyll*: "Thou shalt lye in frost and fire, with sicknes and hunger."

And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine :²
But this eternal³ blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list !
If thou didst ever thy dear father love, —

Ham. O God !

Ghost. — Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Ham. Murder !

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is ;
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Ham. Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt ;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,⁴
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear :
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,⁵
A serpent stung me ; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forgèd process of my death
Rankly abused : but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

Ham. O my prophetic soul !⁶
My uncle !

² Such is the old form of the word, and so Shakespeare always has it.

³ The Poet repeatedly has *eternal* in the sense of *infernal*, like our Yankee '*tarnal*' ; and such is probably the meaning here ; though some think it means "the mysteries of eternity."

⁴ Of course "Lethe wharf" is the place on the banks of the river Lethe where the old boatman, Charon, had his moorings. — In the preceding line, *shouldst* for *wouldst*. See page 146, note 11.

⁵ *Orchard* and *garden* were synonymous.

⁶ Hamlet has suspected "some foul play," and now his suspicion seems prophetic, or as if inspired.

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
 With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,—
 O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
 So to seduce ! — won to his shameful lust
 The will of my most seeming-virtuous Queen.
 O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there !
 From me, whose love was of that dignity,
 That it went hand in hand even with the vow
 I made to her in marriage ; and to decline
 Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor
 To ⁷ those of mine !
 But virtue, as it never will be moved,
 Though lewdness court it in a shape of Heaven ;
 So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
 Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
 And prey on garbage.
 But, soft ! methinks I scent the morning air ;
 Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
 My custom always in the afternoon,
 Upon my sécur⁸ hour thy uncle stole,
 With juice of cursèd hebenon ⁹ in a vial,
 And in the porches of mine ears did pour
 The leperous distilment ; whose effect ¹⁰
 Holds such an enmity wi' th' blood of man,
 That swift as quicksilver it courses through
 The natural gates and alleys of the body ; ¹¹

⁷ *To*, again, for *compared to*. See page 159, note 28.

⁸ *Secure* has the sense of the Latin *securus* ; *unguarded, unsuspecting*.

⁹ *Hebenon* is probably derived from *henbane*, the oil of which, according to Pliny, dropped into the ears, disturbs the brain ; and there is sufficient evidence that it was held poisonous. So in Anton's *Satires*, 1606 : "The poison'd henbane, whose cold juice doth kill."

¹⁰ *Effect for efficacy, or effectiveness* ; the effect put for the cause.

¹¹ The Poet here implies as much as was then known touching the circulation of the blood. The lawyers claim Shakespeare as of their house ; I suspect the physicians have an equal right to him. See page 48, note 54.

And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
 And curd, like eager¹² droppings into milk,
 The thin and wholesome blood : so did it mine ;
 And a most instant tetter bark'd¹³ about,
 Most lazarus-like, with vile and loathsome crust
 All my smooth body.
 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
 Of life, of crown, of Queen, at once dispatch'd ;
 Cut off even in the blossom of my sins,
 Unhousell'd, disappointed, unanel'd ;¹⁴
 No reckoning made, but sent to my account
 With all my imperfections on my head.

Ham. O, horrible ! O, horrible ! most horrible !

Ghost. If thou hast nature¹⁵ in thee, bear it not ;
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
 A couch for luxury and damnèd incest. + |
 But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
 Taint not thy mind,¹⁶ nor let thy soul contrive
 Against thy mother aught : leave her to Heaven,
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once ! | H

¹² *Eager* has occurred before in the sense of *sharp, biting*. "Eager droppings" are drops of *acid*. See vol. vi. page 24, note 2, for *posset*.

¹³ *Bark'd* means *formed a bark or scab*. — *Instant* in the sense of the Latin *instans*; *urgent, importunate, itching*. — The meaning of *lazar-like* is well illustrated in *Paradise Lost*, xi. 477-488.

¹⁴ *Unhousell'd* is without having received the sacrament. *Disappointed* is *unappointed, unprepared*. A man well furnished for an enterprise is said to be *well-appointed*. *Unanel'd* is without extreme unction. So in Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey*: "Then we began to put him in mind of Christ's passion; and sent for the abbot of the place to *anneal* him. These "last offices" were thought to mitigate the pains of Purgatory.

¹⁵ *Nature* for *natural affection*. A very frequent usage.

¹⁶ This part of the injunction is well worth noting: time and manner are left to Hamlet; only he is to keep himself clean from crime and from dis honour: his revenge must be righteous, and according to the demands of justice, not merely personal.

The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual¹⁷ fire :
Adieu, adieu, adieu ! remember me. [Exit.]

Ham. O all you host of Heaven ! O Earth ! what else ?
And shall I couple Hell ? O, fie !¹⁸ Hold, hold, my heart ;
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. — Remember thee !
Ay, thou poor Ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe.¹⁹ Remember thee !
Yea, from the table²⁰ of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there ;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter : yes, by Heaven ! —
O most pernicious woman ! —
O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain !
My tables ;²¹ meet it is I set it down,
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain ;
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark. —
So, uncle, there you are.²² — Now to my word ;

¹⁷ *Uneffectual* because it gives light without heat, does not *burn*. — *Matin*, properly morning-prayers, is here put for *morning*.

¹⁸ Hamlet invokes Heaven and Earth, and then asks if he shall invoke Hell also. "O, fie !" refers to the latter, and implies a strong negative.

¹⁹ By *this globe* Hamlet means his *head*.

²⁰ *Table* for *tablet*. — *Saws* is *sayings* ; *pressures*, *impressions*.

²¹ "Tables, or books, or registers for memory of things" were used in Shakespeare's time by all ranks of persons, and carried in the pocket; what we call *memorandum-books*.

²² This, I think, has commonly been taken in too literal and formal a way, as if Hamlet were carefully writing down the axiomatic saying he has just uttered. I prefer Professor Werder's view of the matter: "Hamlet pulls out his tablets, and jabs the point of his pencil once or twice into the leaf, because he cannot do the same to the King with his sword, as he

It is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me:*

I have sworn't.

Hora. [Within.] My lord, my lord,—

Marc. [Within.] Lord Hamlet,—

Hora. [Within.] Heaven secure him!

Marc. [Within.] So be it!

Hora. [Within.] Illo, ho, ho, my lord!

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.²³

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Marc. How is't, my noble lord?

Hora. What news, my lord?

Ham. O, wonderful!

Hora. Good my lord, tell it.

Ham. No; you'll reveal it.

Hora. Not I, my lord, by Heaven.

Marc. Nor I, my lord.

Ham. How say you, then? would heart of man once
think it?

But you'll be secret?

Hora. } Ay, by Heaven, my lord.
Marc. }

Ham. There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he's an arrant knave.²⁴

Hora. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave
To tell us this.

writing

would like to do,—nothing further; only such marks, such a sign, does he make. That stands for 'So, uncle, there you are!' And although he says he must write it down for himself, he does not literally write; that does not accord with his mood and situation."

²³ This is the call which falconers use to their hawk in the air when they would have him come down to them.

²⁴ Dr. Isaac Ray, a man of large science and ripe experience in the treatment of insanity, says of Hamlet's behaviour in this scene, that "it betrays the excitement of delirium,—the wandering of a mind reeling under the first stroke of disease."

Ham. Why, right ; you are i' the right ;
 And so, without more circumstance²⁵ at all,
 I hold it fit that we shake hands and part :
 You, as your business and desire shall point you,—
 For every man hath business and desire,
 Such as it is ; — and, for mine own poor part,
 Look you, I'll go pray.

Hora. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

Ham. I'm sorry they offend you, heartily ;
 Yes, faith, heartily.

Hora. There's no offence, my lord.

Ham. Yes, by Saint Patrick,²⁶ but there is, Horatio,
 And much offence too. Touching this vision here,
 It is an honest ghost,²⁷ that let me tell you :
 For your desire to know what is between us,
 O'ermaster't²⁸ as you may. And now, good friends,
 As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
 Give me one poor request.

Hora. What is't, my lord ? we will.

Ham. Never make known what you have seen to-night.

Hora. } My lord, we will not.
Marc. }
Ham. Nay, but swear't.

Hora. In faith, my lord, not I.

Marc. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.

²⁵ *Circumstance* is sometimes used for *circumlocution*. But it was also used for *circumstantial detail* ; and such is probably the meaning here.

²⁶ Warburton has ingeniously defended Shakespeare for making the Danish Prince swear by *St. Patrick*, by observing that the whole northern world had their learning from Ireland.

²⁷ Hamlet means that the Ghost is a real ghost, just what it appears to be, and not "the Devil" in "a pleasing shape," as Horatio had apprehended it to be. See page 175, note 17.

²⁸ That is, o'ermaster your *desire* ; "subdue it as you best can."

Marc. We've sworn, my lord, already.²⁹

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost. [Beneath.] Swear.

Ham. Ha, ha, boy ! say'st thou so ? art thou there, true-penny ?³⁰ —

Come on,— you hear this fellow in the cellarage,—
Consent to swear.

Hora. Propose the oath, my lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen :
Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [Beneath.] Swear.

Ham. *Hic et ubique ?* then we'll shift our ground.—
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword,
Never to speak of this that you have heard :
Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [Beneath.] Swear.

Ham. Well said, old mole ! canst work i' the ground so
fast ?

A worthy pioneer !³¹ — Once more remove, good friends.

Hor. O day and night ! but this is wondrous strange.

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.

There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.³²

²⁹ The oath they have already sworn is *in faith*. But this has not enough of ritual solemnity in it, to satisfy Hamlet. The custom of swearing by the sword, or rather by the cross at the hilt of it, is very ancient. The Saviour's name was sometimes inscribed on the handle. So that swearing by one's sword was the most solemn oath a Christian soldier could take.

³⁰ *True-penny* is an old familiar term for a right honest fellow.

³¹ Alluding to one of the offices of military engineers, which is to *pioneer* an army ; that is, to go before and clear the road.

³² Strictly speaking, *your* is redundant here. Hamlet means *any* philosophy. The Poet often uses the pronouns in that way. So in v. 1, of this play : " And *your* water is a sore decayer of *your* whoreson dead body." In the text, however, I suspect that *your* is meant to convey a mild sneer at

But come :

Here, as before, never, so help you Mercy,
 How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself, —
 As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
 To put an antic disposition on,³³ —
 That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
 With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
 Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
 as, *Well, well, we know*; or, *We could, an if we would*;
 or, *If we list to speak*; or, *There be, an if they might*;
 Or such ambiguous giving-out, to note
 That you know aught of me; — this not to do,
 So Grace and Mercy at your most need help you,
 Swear.

Ghost. [Beneath.] Swear.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit! — [They swear.] So,
gentlemen,

With all my love I do commend me to you;
 And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
 May do t' express his love and friending to you,
 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
 And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
 The time is out of joint: O cursèd spite,
 That ever I was born to set it right!

Nay, come; let's go together.

[Exeunt.

philosophy, which has sometimes been as arrogant as science is in some of her modern representatives.

³³ This has been taken as proving that Hamlet's "antic disposition" is merely assumed for a special purpose. But our ripest experts in the matter are far from regarding it so. They tell us that veritable madmen are sometimes inscrutably cunning in arts for disguising their state; saying, in effect, "To be sure, you may find me acting rather strangely at times, but I know what I am about, and have a purpose in it."

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Elsinore. A Room in POLONIUS'S House.**Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO.**Polo.* Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.*Reyn.* I will, my lord.*Polo.* You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquiry
Of his behaviour.*Reyn.* My lord, I did intend it.*Polo.* Marry, well said; very well said. Look you, sir,
Inquire me first what Danskers¹ are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep;²
What company, at what expense; and, finding,
By this encompassment and drift of question,
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it:³
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;
As thus, *I know his father and his friends,*
And in part him. Do you mark this, Reynaldo?*Reyn.* Ay, very well, my lord.*Polo.* *And in part him; but, you may say, not well:*
But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild;

¹ *Dansker* is *Dane*; *Dansk* being the ancient name of Denmark.—Here *me* is used very much as *your* in the preceding scene, page 183, note 32.

² The Poet repeatedly uses *keep* in the sense of *lodge* or *dwell*.

³ This seems illogical, and would be so in any mouth but a politician's, as implying that general inquiries would come to the point faster than particular ones. But here, again, *your* is used as explained in note 32, page 183. The scheme here laid down is, to *steal* upon the truth by roundabout statements and questions; or, as it is afterwards said, "By indirections find directions out."

Addicted so and so. And there put on him
 What forgeries you please ; marry, none so rank
 As may dishonour him ; take heed of that ;
 But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips
 As are companions noted and most known
 To youth and liberty.

Reyn. As gaming, my lord ?

Polo. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing,
 Quarrelling, drabbing : you may go so far.

Reyn. My lord, that would dishonour him.

Polo. Faith, no ; as you may season it in the charge.
 You must not put another scandal on him,
 That he is open of incontinency ;⁴
 That's not my meaning : but breathe his faults so quaintly,⁵
 That they may seem the taints of liberty ;
 The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind ;
 A sayageness in unreclaimèd blood,
 Of general assault.⁶

Reyn. But, my good lord,—

Polo. Wherefore should you do this ?

Reyn. Ay, my lord, I would know that.

Polo. Marry, sir, here's my driti ;
 And I believe it is a fetch of warrant :⁷
 You laying these slight sullies on my son,

⁴ The emphasis, here, is on *open*, and *of* is equivalent to *in respect of*. So that the meaning is, "You must not put *the further* scandal upon him, that he is *openly* incontinent, or that he indulges his passions publicly and 'with unbashful forehead,' as this would argue him to be shameless." Polonius justly thinks that good appearances are worth something, and that, in a shameless vice, the shamelessness is the worst part of it; there being then nothing for amendment to fasten upon.—Perhaps I should add, that here, again, *season* is *qualify* or *mitigate*. See page 161, note 39.

⁵ *Quaintly*, from the Latin *comptus*, properly means *elegantly*, but is here used in the sense of *adroitly* or *ingeniously*.

⁶ A wildness of untamed blood, such as youth is generally assailed by.

⁷ "A fetch of warrant" is an allowable stratagem or artifice.

As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working,
Mark you,

Your party in converſe, him you would sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty,⁸ be assured
He closes with you in this consequence :

Good sir, or so ; or friend, or gentleman, —
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country ; —

Reyn. Very good, my lord.

Polo. And then, sir, does he this, — he does — what was I about to say? — By the Mass,⁹ I was about to say something : — where did I leave ?

Reyn. At *closes in the consequence*; at *friend or so*, and *gentleman*.

Polo. At *closes in the consequence*, — ay, marry ;
He closes with you thus : *I know the gentleman* ;
I saw him yesterday, or *'tother day*,
Or then, or then ; *with* such or such ; *and, as you say*,
There was he gaming, *there o'ertook in's rouse*,
There falling out at tennis : or, perchance,
I saw him enter such a house of sale,
Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth.
See you now,
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth ;¹⁰
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlaces and with assays of bias,¹¹

⁸ Having at any time seen the youth you speak of guilty in the forenamed vices. — "Closes with you in this consequence" means, apparently, agrees with you in this conclusion. — *Addition* again for title.

⁹ *Mass* is the old name of the Lord's Supper, and is still used by the Roman Catholics. It was often sworn by, as in this instance.

¹⁰ Polonius is fond of angling arts. The *carp* is a species of fish.

¹¹ "Of wisdom and of reach" is here equivalent to *by cunning and over-reaching*. — *Windlaces* is here used in the sense of taking a winding, cir-

By indirections find directions out :
 So, by my former lecture and advice,
 Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?¹²

Reyn. My lord, I have.

Polo. God b' wi' you !¹³ fare you well.

Reyn. Good my lord !

Polo. Observe his inclination in yourself.¹⁴

Reyn. I shall, my lord.

Polo. And let him ply his music.¹⁵

Reyn. Well, my lord.

Polo. Farewell ! — [Exit REYNALDO.

Enter OPHELIA.

How now, Ophelia ! what's the matter ?

Ophe. Alas, my lord, I have been so affrighted !

Polo. With what, i' the name of God ?

Ophe. My lord, as I was sewing in my chamber,
 Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced ;¹⁶
 No hat upon his head ; his stockings foul'd,

curious, or roundabout course to a thing, instead of going *directly* to it; or, as we sometimes say, "beating about the bush," instead of coming straight to the point. This is shown by a late writer in *The Edinburgh Review*, who quotes from Golding's translation of Ovid :

The winged god, beholding them returning in a troupe,
 Continu'd not directly forth, but gan me down to stoupe,
 And fetch'd a *windlass* round about.

"Assays of bias" are *trials of inclination*. A bias is a weight in one side of a bowl, which keeps it from rolling straight to the mark, as in ninepins.

¹² " You *understand* me, do you not ? "

¹³ The old phrase, " God be with you," is here in the process of abbreviation to what we now use, " Good-bye."

¹⁴ " Use your own eyes upon him, as well as learn from others." Or the meaning may be, " comply with his inclinations in order to draw him out." *Observe* sometimes has this sense of *yielding to*, and so *flattering*.

¹⁵ " Eye him sharply, but *slyly*, and let him fiddle his secrets all out."

¹⁶ *Unbraced* is the same as our *unbuttoned*.

Ungarter'd, and down-gyvèd to his ankle ;¹⁷
Pale as his shirt ; his knees knocking each other ;
And with a look so piteous in purpórt
As if he had been loosèd out of Hell
To speak of horrors, — he comes before me.

Polo. Mad for thy love ?

Ophe. My lord, I do not know ;
But, truly, I do fear it.

Polo. What said he ?

Ophe. He took me by the wrist, and held me hard ;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it.¹⁸ Long time stay'd he so ;
At last, — a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down, —
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound,
That it did seem to shatter all his bulk,¹⁹
And end his being : that done, he lets me go ;
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes ;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

Polo. Come, go with me : I will go seek the King.
This is the very ecstasy of love,
Whose violent property fordoes²⁰ itself,
And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
As oft as any passion under heaven

¹⁷ Hanging down like the loose cincture that confines the fetters or gyves round the ankles.

¹⁸ " To such a *study* of my face as *if* he would *make a picture of it.*"

¹⁹ Here *bulk* is put for *breast*. The usage was common.

²⁰ All through this play, *ecstasy* is *madness*. It was used for any violent perturbation of mind. — *Fordo* was the same as *undo* or *destroy*.

That does afflict our natures. I am sorry, —
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

Ophe. No, my good lord ; but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters, and denied
His access to me.

Polo. That hath made him mad.
I'm sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted²¹ him. I fear'd he did but trifl'd,
And meant to wreck thee ; but beshrew²² my jealousy !
By Heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,²³
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion.²⁴ Come, go we to the King :
This must be known ; which, being kept close, might move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love.²⁵ [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*The Same. A Room in the Castle.*

Enter the King, the Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,
and Attendants.

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern !
Moreover that¹ we much did long to see you,
The need we have to use you did provoke

²¹ To quote is to note, to mark, or observe.

²² Beshrew was much used as a mild form of imprecation ; about the same as confound it ! or, a plague upon it !

²³ In this admirable scene, Polonius, who is throughout the skeleton of his former skill in state-craft, hunts the trail of policy at a dead scent, supplied by the weak fever-smell in his own nostrils. — COLERIDGE.

²⁴ We old men are as apt to overreach ourselves with our own policy, as the young are to miscarry through inconsideration.

²⁵ The sense is rather obscure, but appears to be, " By keeping Hamlet's love secret, we may cause more of grief to others, than of hatred on his part by disclosing it." The Poet sometimes strains language pretty hard in order to close a scene with a rhyme. The infinitives are here gerundial.

¹ Moreover that for besides that. Not so elsewhere, I think.

Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation ; so I call it,
Since nor th' exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was. What it should be,
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
So much from th' understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of. I entreat you both,
That, being of so young days brought up with him,
And since so neighbour'd to his youth and humour,²
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our Court
Some little time ; so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you ;
And sure I am two men there are not living
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To show us so much gentry³ and good-will
As to expend your time with us awhile
For the supply and profit of our hope,⁴
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

Rosen. Both your Majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

Guild. But we both obey ;
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,
To lay our service freely at your feet,

² And having since had so near an opportunity of studying his inclination and character during his youth.

³ *Gentry for courtesy, gentleness, or good-breeding.*

⁴ "The supply and profit" is the *feeding and realizing*.

To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz :
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too-much-changèd son.— Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guild. Heavens make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him !

Queen. Ay, amen !

[*Exeunt ROSEN., GUILDEN., and some Attendants.*]

Enter POLONIUS.

Polo. Th' ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Polo. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious King :⁵
And I do think—or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath used to do—that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King. O, speak of that ; that do I long to hear.

Polo. Give first admittance to th' ambassadors ;
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.—

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main,⁶

⁵ "I hold my duty both to my God and to my King, as I do my soul."

⁶ *Doubt*, again, for *suspect* or *fear*. See page 164, note 45.—*Main* seems to be here used for *matter of chief interest*, the thing or things with which people's thoughts have been mainly occupied.

His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

King. Well, we shall sift him.—

Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

Welcome, my good friends !

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway ?

Volt. Most fair return of greetings and desires.

Upon our first, he sent out to suppress

His nephew's levies ; which to him appear'd

To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack ;

But, better look'd into, he truly found

It was against your Highness : whereat grieved,—

That so his sickness, age, and impotence,

Was falsely borne in hand,⁷ — sends out arrests

On Fortinbras ; which he, in brief, obeys ;

Receives rebuke from Norway ; and, in fine,

Makes vow before his uncle never more

To give th' assay of arms against your Majesty.

Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,

Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee ;⁸

And his commission to employ those soldiers,

So levied as before, against the Polack :

With an entreaty, herein further shown, [Gives a paper.

That it might please you to give quiet pass

Through your dominions for this enterprise,

On such regards of safety and allowance⁹

As therein are set down.

King. It likes us well ;¹⁰

⁷ To bear in hand is to delude or impose upon by false assurances.

⁸ Fee was often used for fee-simple, which is the strongest tenure in English law, and means an estate held in absolute right.

⁹ That is, on such pledges of safety to the country, and on such terms of permission. The passage of an army through a country is apt to cause great trouble and damage to the people.

¹⁰ "It likes us" for "it pleases us," or "we like it." Often so.

And at our more consider'd time¹¹ we'll read,
 Answer, and think upon this business :
 Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour.
 Go to your rest ; at night we'll feast together :
 Most welcome home ! [*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*]

Polo. This business is well ended.
 My liege, and madam, to expostulate¹²
 What majesty should be, what duty is,
 Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
 Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
 Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
 I will be brief : Your noble son is mad :
 Mad call I it ; for, to define true madness,
 What is't but to be nothing else but mad ?
 But let that go.

Queen. More matter, with less art.
Polo. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
 That he is mad, 'tis true : 'tis true 'tis pity ;
 And pity 'tis 'tis true : a foolish figure ;
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.
 Mad let us grant him, then : and now remains
 That we find out the cause of this effect ;
 Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
 For this effect defective comes by cause :
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
 Perpend :¹³
 I have a daughter, — have whilst she is mine, —
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
 Hath given me this : now gather, and surmise.

¹¹ That is, "when we have had time for *further consideration*." The Poet has several like expressions in this play.

¹² *Expostulate* in the Latin sense of *argue* or *discuss*.

¹³ *Perpend* is *weigh* or *consider*.

[Reads.] *To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia, — That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase ; beautified is a vile phrase : but you shall hear. Thus :*

[Reads.] *In her excellent-white bosom, these,¹⁴ &c. —*

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Polo. Good madam, stay awhile ; I will be faithful.

[Reads.] *Doubt thou the stars are fire ;*

Doubt that the Sun doth move ;

Doubt truth to be a liar ;

But never doubt I love.

O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers : I have not art to reckon¹⁵ my groans ; but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

*Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this
machine is to him,¹⁶ HAMLET.*

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me ;

And, more above, hath his solicitings,

As they fell out by time, by means, and place,

All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she
Received his love ?

Polo. What do you think of me ?

King. As of a man faithful and honourable.

Polo. I would fain prove so. But what might you think, —
When I had seen this hot love on the wing,
(As I perceived it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me,) — what might you,

¹⁴ The word *these* was usually added at the end of the superscription of letters. Hamlet's letter is somewhat in the euphuistic style which was fashionable in the Poet's time.

¹⁵ Hamlet is *tacitly* quibbling: he first uses *numbers* in the sense of *verses*, and here *implies* the other sense.

¹⁶ That is, "while he is living." *Machine* for *body*; as the body is framed, and works, upon strictly-mechanical principles.

Or my dear Majesty your Queen here, think,
 If I had play'd the desk or table-book ;¹⁷
 Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb ;¹⁸
 Or look'd upon this love with idle sight ;—
 What might you think ? No, I went round¹⁹ to work,
 And my young mistress thus I did bespeak :
*Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star ;*²⁰
This must not be. And then I precepts gave her,
 That she should lock herself from his resort,
 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens :
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice ;
 And he, repulsèd,—a short tale to make,—
 Fell into a sadness ; then into a fast ;
 Thence to a watch ; thence into a weakness ;
 Thence to a lightness ; and, by this declension,
 Into the madness wherein now he raves,
 And all we mourn for.

King. Do you think 'tis this ?

Queen. It may be, very likely.

Polo. Hath there been such a time—I'd fain know that—
 That I have positively said '*Tis so*,
 When it proved otherwise ?

King. Not that I know.

Polo. [Pointing to his head and shoulder.] Take this
 from this, if this be otherwise.
 If circumstances lead me, I will find
 Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed

¹⁷ By keeping dark about the matter. A desk or table-book does not prate of what it contains. A table-book is a case or set of tablets, to carry in the pocket, and write memoranda upon. See page 180, note 21.

¹⁸ "If I had given my heart a *hint* to be mute about their passion." "*Conniventia, a winking at* ; a sufferance ; *a feigning not to see or know.*"

¹⁹ To be *round* is to be *plain, downright, outspoken.*

²⁰ Not within thy *destiny* ; alluding to the supposed influence of the stars on the fortune of life.

Within the centre.²¹

King. How may we try it further?

Polo. You know, sometimes he walks for hours together
Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does, indeed.

Polo. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him :
Be you and I behind an arras ²² then ;
Mark the encounter : if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a State,
But keep a farm and carters.

King. We will try it.

Queen. But look where sadly the poor wretch ²³ comes
reading.

Polo. Away, I do beseech you, both away :
I'll board ²⁴ him presently.—

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*

Enter HAMLET, reading.

O, give me leave :

How does my good Lord Hamlet ?

Ham. Well, God-a-mercy.

Polo. Do you know me, my lord ?

Ham. Excellent well ; you're a fishmonger.²⁵

²¹ *Centre* here means, no doubt, the Earth, which, in the old astronomy, was held to be literally the centre of the solar system.

²² In Shakespeare's time the chief rooms of houses were lined with tapestry hangings, which were suspended some distance from the walls, to keep them from being rotted by the damp. See vol. vi. page 63, note 12.

²³ *Wretch* was the strongest term of endearment in the language ; generally implying, however, a dash of pity.

²⁴ To *board* him is to *accost* or *address* him.

²⁵ *Fishmonger* meant an angler as well as a dealer in fish. Hamlet probably means that Polonius has come to *fish out* his secret.— *God-a-mercy*, second line before, is an old colloquialism, commonly meaning "God have mercy" : here it means "thank God" ; *mercy* being used just as in the French *grand merci*.

Polo. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Polo. Honest, my lord !

Ham. Ay, sir ; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man pick'd out of ten thousand.

Polo. That's very true, my lord.

Ham. For, if the Sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion,²⁶ — Have you a daughter ?

Polo. I have, my lord.

Ham. Let her not walk i' the sun : conception is a blessing ; but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to't.

Polo. How say you by that ?²⁷ — [Aside.] Still harping on my daughter : yet he knew me not at first ; he said I was a fishmonger : he is far gone, far gone : and truly in my youth I suffer'd much extremity for love ; very near this. I'll speak to him again. — What do you read, my lord ?

Ham. Words, words, words.

Polo. What is the matter, my lord ?

Ham. Between who ?

Polo. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

Ham. Slanders, sir : for the satirical rogue says here, that old men have gray beards ; that their faces are wrinkled ; their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum ; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams : all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty²⁸ to have it thus

²⁶ "A good kissing carrion" is, no doubt, a carrion good for *kissing*, or good to *kiss*. So in *The Merry Wives*, v. 5, we have "kissing-comfits," which were candies flavoured so as to perfume the breath, and render the lips sweet for kissing. And so we often say "good hay-making weather," meaning, of course, weather good for hay-making, or good to make hay.

²⁷ "How say you by that?" is "What do you mean by that?"

²⁸ Shakespeare sometimes uses *honesty* with the sense of the adjective *right*, or *honourable*.

set down ; for you yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.²⁹

Polo. [Aside.] Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.—Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave?

Polo. Indeed, that is out o' the air.—[Aside.] How pregnant³⁰ sometimes his replies are ! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be deliver'd of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal,—[Aside.] except my life, except my life, except my life.

Polo. Fare you well, my lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools !

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Polo. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet ; there he is.

Rosen. [To POLONIUS.] God save you, sir !

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

Guild. My honour'd lord !

Rosen. My most dear lord !

Ham. My excellent-good friends ! How dost thou, Guildenstern ?—Ah, Rosencrantz !—Good lads, how do ye both ?

Rosen. As the indifferent³¹ children of the Earth.

Guild. Happy, in that we are not overhappy ;
On Fortune's cap we're not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe ?

Rosen. Neither, my lord.

²⁹ That is, "if you could *turn your life* backward, and grow young."

³⁰ *Pregnant*, here, is pithy, *full of meaning*, or of *pertinency*.

³¹ *Indifferent*, here, has the sense of *middling*, — *tolerably well-off*.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?

Guild. Faith, her privates we.

Ham. In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true; she is a strumpet. What's the news?

Rosen. None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guild. Prison, my lord!

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Rosen. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

Rosen. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

Rosen. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guild. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious³² is merely the shadow of a dream.

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Rosen. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow.

³² This is obscure: but "the very substance of the ambitious" probably means the substance of *that which* the ambitious *pursue*, not that of which they *are made*. The obscurity grows from an uncommon use of the objective genitive. The passage reminds me of Burke's well-known saying, "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!"

Ham. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the Court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.³³

Rosen. } We'll wait upon you.
Guild. }

Ham. No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended.³⁴ But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?³⁵

Rosen. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear at a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guild. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Why, any thing—but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour.³⁶ I know the good King and Queen have sent for you.

Rosen. To what end, my lord?

³³ Hamlet is here playing or fencing with words, and seems to lose himself in the riddles he is making. The meaning is any thing but clear; perhaps was not meant to be understood. But *bodies* is probably put for *substance* or *substances*; and the sense appears to turn partly upon the fact that *substance* and *shadow* are antithetic and correlative terms, as there can be no shadow without a substance to cast it. So the best comment I have met with is Dr. Bucknill's: "If ambition is but a shadow, something beyond ambition must be the substance from which it is thrown. If ambition, represented by a king, is a shadow, the antitype of ambition, represented by a beggar, must be the opposite of the shadow, that is, the substance."—The word *outstretched* infers, apparently, that the Poet had in mind the sculptured images of heroic kings lying in death, such as were in old times much used for monuments.—*Fay* is merely a diminutive of *faith*.

³⁴ Referring, perhaps, to the "bad dreams" spoken of a little before.

³⁵ "What is your business at Elsinore?" See page 160, note 35.

³⁶ To *colour* is to *disguise*, or *conceal*.

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no.

Rosen. [Aside to *Guild.*] What say you?

Ham. [Aside.] Nay, then, I have an eye of you.³⁷ — If you love me, hold not off.

Guild. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen moult no feather.³⁸ I have of late — but wherefore I know not — lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the Earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave³⁹ o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, — why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

Rosen. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

³⁷ “I will watch you sharply.” *Of* for *on*; a common usage.

³⁸ Hamlet's fine sense of honour is well shown in this. He will not tempt them to any breach of confidence; and he means that, by telling them the reason, he will forestall their disclosure of it. — *Moult* is an old word used especially of birds when casting their feathers. So in Bacon's *Natural History*: “Some birds there be, that upon their *moult*ing do turn colour; as robin-redbreasts, after their *moult*ing, grow red again by degrees.

³⁹ Here, as often, *brave* is *grand*, *splendid*. See vol. vii. page 14, note 2.

Ham. Why did you laugh, then, when I said *man delights not me?*

Rosen. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment⁴⁰ the players shall receive from you: we coted⁴¹ them on the way, and hither are they coming to offer you service.

Ham. He that plays the king shall be welcome,—his Majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man⁴² shall end his part in peace; the Clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sear;⁴³ and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank-verse shall halt for't.⁴⁴ What players are they?

Rosen. Even those you were wont to take delight in, the tragedians of the city.

⁴⁰ "Lenten entertainment" is entertainment for the season of *Lent*, when players were not allowed to perform in public, in London.

⁴¹ To *cote* is, properly, to *overpass*, to *outstrip*. So Scott, in *Old Mortality*, note J.: "This horse was so fleet, and its rider so expert, that they are said to have outstripped and *coted*, or turned, a hare upon the Bran-Law."

⁴² *Humorous man* here means a man made unhappy by his own crotchets. *Humour* was used for any wayward, eccentric impulse causing a man to be full of ups and downs, or of flats and sharps. The melancholy Jaques in *As You Like It* is an instance.

⁴³ *Tickle* is *delicate, sensitive, easily moved*. *Sear* is the catch of a gunlock, that holds the hammer cocked or half-cocked. Here *o'*, that is, *of*, is equivalent to *in respect of*. The image is of a gunlock with the hammer held so lightly by the catch as to go off at the slightest pressure on the trigger; and the general idea is of persons so prone to laughter, that the least touch or gleam of wit is enough to make them explode. The same thought occurs in *The Tempest*, ii. 1: "I did it to minister occasion to these gentlemen, who are of such *sensible* and nimble lungs, that they always use to laugh at nothing." Here, as in many other places, *sensible* is *sensitive*. In the text, Hamlet is slurring the extemporized witticisms of the Clowns, by a sort of ironical praise. For this explanation I am indebted to the "Clarendon Press Series," which quotes from Howard's *Defensative against the Poyson of supposed Prophecies*, 1620: "Discovering the moods and humors of the vulgar sort to be so loose and *ticklē of the seare*."

⁴⁴ That is, the poet's feet shall go lame from her overworking them.

Ham. How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.⁴⁵

Rosen. I think their innovation comes by the means of the late inhibition.⁴⁶

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? are they so follow'd?

Rosen. No, indeed, they are not.

Ham. How comes it? do they grow rusty?

Rosen. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace; but there is, sir, an eyrie of children, little eyases,⁴⁷ that cry out on the top of question,⁴⁸ and are most tyrannically clapp'd for't: these are now the fashion; and so berattle⁴⁹

⁴⁵ The London theatrical companies, when not allowed to play in the city, were wont to travel about the country, and play in the towns. This was less reputable, and also brought less pay, than playing in the city.

⁴⁶ Referring, no doubt, to an order of the Privy Council, June, 1600. By this order the players were *inhibited* from acting in or near the city during the season of Lent, besides being very much restricted at all other seasons, and hence "chances it they travel," or *stroll* into the country.

⁴⁷ *Eyrie*, from *eyren*, eggs, properly means a *brood*, but sometimes a *nest*. *Eyases* are unfledged hawks.

⁴⁸ "Cry out on the top of question" means, I have no doubt, *exclaim against those who are at the top of their profession*, who are most talked about as having surpassed all others. Shakespeare uses *cry out on*, or *cry on*, nearly if not quite always in the sense of *exclaim against*, or *cry down*. He also often uses *top*, both noun and verb, in the sense of to *excel* or *surpass*. He also has *question* repeatedly in the sense of *talk* or *conversation*. — For this explanation I am mainly indebted to Mr. Joseph Crosby, who remarks to me upon the whole sentence as follows: "A brood of young hawks, unfledged nestlings, that exclaim against, or lampoon, the best productions of the dramatic pen; little chits, that declaim squibs, and turn to ridicule their seniors and betters, both actors and authors, and are vociferously applauded for it."

⁴⁹ To *berattle* is to *berate*, to *squib*. Here, again, I quote from Mr. Crosby: "It is no wonder the regular profession suffer, when children thus 'carry it away,' and are all 'the fashion'; berating the adult performers, and getting 'most tyrannically clapp'd for it'; so much so, that the well-deserving writers for the 'common stages,' grown-up men 'wearing rapiers, are afraid of goose-quills,' (applied to the penny-a-liners for the boys,) and dare scarce come to the play-house any more."

the common stages, — so they call them, — that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither.⁵⁰

Ham. What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted?⁵¹ Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players, — as it is most like, if their means are no better, — their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?⁵²

Rosen. Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre⁵³ them to controversy: there was for a while no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.⁵⁴

Ham. Is't possible?

⁵⁰ The allusion is to the children of St. Paul's and of the Revels, whose performing of plays was much in fashion at the time this play was written. From an early date, the choir-boys of St. Paul's, Westminster, Windsor, and the Chapel Royal, were engaged in such performances, and sometimes played at Court. The complaint here is, that these juveniles abuse "the common stages," that is, the public theatres.

⁵¹ *Escoted is paid*; from the French *escot*, a *shot* or *reckoning*. — *Quality* is *profession* or *calling*; often so used. — "No longer than they can sing" means no longer than they keep the voices of boys.

⁵² *Run down* the profession to which they are themselves to *succeed*. This fully accords with, and approves, the explanation given in note 48. As Mr. Crosby observes, "it appears that a contest was waging between the patrons of these boy-players, who wrote their parts for them, and the writers for 'the common stages,' whom the children so berated and disparaged."

⁵³ The Poet has *to-do* repeatedly in the exact sense of *ado*. — To *tarre* is to *set on*, to incite; a word borrowed from the setting-on of dogs.

⁵⁴ Not "unless the poet and the player" went to fighting each other, but unless *both* the *writers* and the *actors* joined together in pelting and running down the full-grown regular performers. Here, as often, *argument* is the subject-matter or plot of a play, and so is put for the play itself. *Question*, again, is, apparently, the *dialogue*. So that the meaning of the whole seems to be, "The public would not patronize these juvenile performances, unless both the 'eyases' and the 'goosequills,' (that is, the boy-actors and their writers,) in their dialogue, went to abusing or berating the authors and actors of the 'common stages.'" — CROSBY.

Guild. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.⁵⁵

Ham. Do the boys carry it away?⁵⁶

Rosen. Ay, that they do, my lord ; Hercules and his load too.

Ham. It is not very strange ; for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[Flourish of trumpets within.]

Guild. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come ; the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony : let me comply with you in this garb ;⁵⁷ lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome ; but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

Guild. In what, my dear lord ?

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west ; when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Bandyng of wit, or pelting each other with words.

⁵⁶ Carry all the world before them : perhaps an allusion to the *Globe* theatre, the sign of which is said to have been Hercules carrying a globe.

⁵⁷ To *comply with*, as here used, evidently means to be *formally civil* or *polite to*, or to *compliment*. We have it again in the same sense, in v. 2, where Hamlet says of Osræ, " He did *comply with* his dug before he suck'd it." — *Appurtenance* is *appertainings*, or *proper appendages*. — *Garb* is *style* or *manner*. Repeatedly so. — " My *extent* to the players " means *extension* of courtesy and civility to them.

⁵⁸ " To know a hawk from a handsaw " was an old proverb. It appears that *handsaw* was a corruption of *hernsew*, meaning what we call *heron*. Probably our best explanation of the text is from Mr. J. C. Heath, as quoted by Mr. Furness in his *Variorum* : " The expression obviously refers to the sport of hawking. Most birds, especially one of heavy flight like the heron, when roused by the falconer or his dog, would fly down or with the wind, in order to escape. When the wind is from the North, the heron flies

Enter Polonius.

Polo. Well be with you, gentlemen !

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern ; — and you too ; — at each ear a hearer : That great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

Rosen. Happily he's the second time come to them ; for they say an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players ; mark it. — You say right, sir : o' Monday morning ; 'twas so, indeed.⁵⁹

Polo. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome, —

Polo. The actors are come hither, my lord.

Ham. Buz, buz !⁶⁰

Polo. Upon mine honour, —

Ham. Then came each actor on his ass, —

Polo. — the best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene indivisibl[e] or poem unlimited ;⁶¹ Seneca cannot be

towards the South ; and the spectator may be dazzled by the Sun, and be unable to distinguish the hawk from the heron. On the other hand, when the wind is southerly, the heron flies towards the North, and it and the pursuing hawk are clearly seen by the sportsman, who then has his back to the Sun, and without difficulty knows the hawk from the hernsew. A curious reader may further observe that a wind from the precise point north-north-west would be in the eye of the Sun at half-past ten in the forenoon, a likely time for hawking, whereas *southerly* includes a wider range of wind for a good view."

⁵⁹ This is spoken, apparently, in order to blind Polonius as to what they have been talking about.

⁶⁰ Hamlet affects to discredit the news : all a mere *buzzing* or *rumour*. Polonius then assures him, "On my honour" ; which starts the poor joke, "If they are come on your honour, 'then came each actor on his ass'" ; these latter words being probably a quotation from some ballad.

⁶¹ *Indivisibl[e]* for *undivided*. The Poet has many like instances of the

too heavy, not Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty,⁶² these are the only men.

Ham. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

Polo. What treasure had he, my lord?

Ham. Why,

*One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he lovèd passing well.*

Polo. [Aside.] Still on my daughter.

Ham. Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

Polo. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Polo. What follows, then, my lord?

Ham. Why,

As by lot, God wot;

and then, you know,

It came to pass, as most like it was,⁶³ —

endings -able or -ible and -ed used indiscriminately. In the text, *scene* and *poem* are evidently used as equivalent terms. In the Greek Tragedy there was no division into scenes; the scene continued the same, or *undivided*, all through the piece. But in the Gothic Drama, as Shakespeare found and fixed it, the changes of scene are without definite limitations. This seems to be the difference meant. Seneca was considered the best of the Roman tragic writers, and Plautus of the comic.

⁶² "The meaning," says Collier, "probably is, that the players were good, whether at written productions or at extemporal plays, where liberty was allowed to the performers to invent the dialogue, in imitation of the Italian *commedia al improviso.*"

⁶³ Hamlet is teasing the old fox, and quibbling between a logical and a literal sequence. The lines he quotes are from an old ballad, entitled *Jephtha, Judge of Israel*. A copy of the ballad, as Shakespeare knew it, was reprinted in Evan's *Old Ballads*, 1810; the first stanza as follows:

I have read that many years agoe,
When Jephtha, judge of Israel,
Had one fair daughter and no moe,
Whom he loved passing well;

the first row of the pious chanson⁶⁴ will show you more; for look, where my abridgements come.⁶⁵—

Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad to see ye well. Welcome, good friends.—O, my old friend! thy face is valanced since I saw thee last:⁶⁶ comest thou to beard me in Denmark?—What, my young lady and mistress! By'r Lady,⁶⁷ your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine.⁶⁸ Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not crack'd within the ring.⁶⁹—Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at any thing we

As by lot, God wot,
It came to passe, most like it was,
Great warrs there should be,
And who should be the chiefe but he, but he.

⁶⁴ *Chanson* is something to be *sung* or *chanted*; and “the first row” probably means the first *column*, or, perhaps, *stanza*.

⁶⁵ Perhaps Hamlet calls the players “my *abridgements*” in the same sense and for the same reason as he afterwards calls them “the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time.” He may have the further meaning of *abridging* or *cutting short* his talk with Polonius. Or, again, he may mean that their office is to *abridge the time*, or to minister *pastimes*.

⁶⁶ *Valanced* is *fringed*. The player has lately grown a beard.

⁶⁷ *By'r Lady* is a contraction of *by our Lady*, referring to the Virgin Mary. In the Poet's time, female parts were acted by boys; and Hamlet is addressing one whom as a boy he had seen playing some heroine.

⁶⁸ *Chopine* was the name of an enormously thick-soled shoe which Spanish and Italian ladies were in the habit of wearing, in order, as would seem, to make themselves as tall as the men, perhaps taller; or it may have been, to keep their long skirts from mopping the sidewalks too much. The fashion is said to have been used at one time by the English.

⁶⁹ The old gold coin was thin and liable to crack. There was a *ring* or circle on it, within which the sovereign's head was stamped; if the crack extended beyond this ring, it was rendered uncurrent: it was therefore a simile applied to any other injured object. There is some humour in applying it to a *cracked voice*.

see :⁷⁰ we'll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality ; come, a passionate speech.

I Play. What speech, my lord ?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once,—but it was never acted ; or, if it was, not above once, for the play, I remember, pleased not the million ; 'twas caviar to the general :⁷¹ but it was—as I received it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine⁷²—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallents in the lines to make the matter savoury,⁷³ nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affection ; but call'd it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved : 'twas *Æneas'* tale to Dido ; and thereabout of it especially where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line : let me see, let me see, —

The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast,—

'tis not so ; it begins with Pyrrhus :

*The rugged Pyrrhus,—he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couchèd in the ominous horse,—*

⁷⁰ From this it would seem that the English custom in falconry was, first to let off some bird into the air, and then to fly the hawk after it; the French, to fly the hawk at any bird that might happen to be within ken.

⁷¹ *Caviar* was the pickled roes of certain fish of the sturgeon kind, called in Italy *caviale*, and much used there and in other countries. Great quantities were prepared on the river Volga formerly. As a dish of high seasoning and peculiar flavour, it was not relished by the *many*.

⁷² Meaning, probably, were *better than mine*. See page 204, note 48.

⁷³ No impudent high-seasoning or false brilliancy, to give it an unnatural relish. *Sallet* is explained "a pleasant and merry word that maketh folk to laugh."—This passage shows that the Poet understood the essential poverty of "fine writing."

*Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
 With heraldry more dismal: head to foot
 Now is he total gules;⁷⁴ horridly trick'd
 With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
 Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
 That lend a tyrannous and damnèd light
 To their vile murders. Roasted in wrath and fire,
 And thus o'ersized with coagulate gore,
 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
 Old grandsire Priam seeks.—*

So, proceed you.

Polo. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent
 and good discretion.

I Play.

*Anon he finds him
 Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
 Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
 Th' unnervèd father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
 Stoops to his base; and with a hideous crash
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,
 Which was declining on the milky head
 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:
 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood;
 And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
 Did nothing.
 But, as we often see, against some storm,
 A silence in the heavens, the rack⁷⁵ stand still,*

⁷⁴ *Gules* is red, in the language of heraldry: to *trick* is to colour.

⁷⁵ *Rack*, from *reek*, is used by old writers to signify the highest and therefore lightest clouds. So in Fletcher's *Women Pleased*, iv. 2: "Far swifter

*The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
 As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
 Doth rend the region ;⁷⁶ so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
 Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work ;
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
 On Mars's armour, forged for proof eterne,⁷⁷
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
 Now falls on Priam.—
 Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune ! All you gods,
 In general synod, take away her power ;
 Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
 And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven
 As low as to the fiends !*

Polo. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's with your beard.—Pr'ythee, say on : he's for a *jig*⁷⁸ or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps : say on ; come to Hecuba.

1 Play. *But who, O, who had seen the mobled Queen—*

Ham. *The mobled queen ?*

Polo. That's good ; *mobled queen* is good.⁷⁹

1 Play. *—Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames
 With bisson rheum ;⁸⁰ a clout upon that head*

than the sailing *rack* that gallops upon the wings of angry winds." So that the heavens must be silent indeed, when "the rack stands still."

⁷⁶ *Region*, here, is *sky*, or the *air*. So in the last speech of this scene : "I should have fatted all the *region* kites," &c.

⁷⁷ For *eternal resistance* to assault. As we say *shot-proof, water-proof*.

⁷⁸ *Giga*, in Italian, was a fiddle or crowd ; *gigaro*, a fiddler, or minstrel. Hence a *jig* was a ballad, or ditty, sung to the fiddle.

⁷⁹ *Mobled* is *hastily* or *carelessly dressed*. To *mob* or *mab* is still used in the north of England for to dress in a slatternly manner ; and Coleridge says " *mob-cap* is still a word in common use for a morning cap."

⁸⁰ *Bisson* is *blind*. *Bisson rheum* is therefore *blinding tears*.—A *clout* is simply a piece of cloth or of linen.

*Where late the diadem stood; and, for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemèd loins
A blanket, in th' alarm of fear caught up; —
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced:
But, if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made —
Unless things mortal move them not at all —
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
And passion in the gods.⁸¹*

Polo. Look, whèr he has not turn'd his colour, and has tears in's eyes. — Pray you, no more.

Ham. 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest soon. — Good my lord, will you see the players well bestow'd? Do you hear? let them be well used; for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time: ⁸² after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

Polo. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Ham. God's bodykins, ⁸³ man, better! use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Polo. Come, sirs.

Ham. Follow him, friends; we'll hear a play to-morrow. —

[Exit POLONIUS with all the Players but the First.
Dost thou hear me, old friend? can you play *The Murder of Gonzago*?

⁸¹ By a hardy poetical license this expression means, "Would have filled with tears the burning eyes of heaven." — *Passion*, here, is *compassion*.

⁸² The condensed efficacies and representatives of the age. In Shakespeare's time, the Drama, including both authors and actors, was a sort of Fourth Estate; perhaps as much so as the Newspaper is now.

⁸³ *Bodykins* is merely a diminutive of *body*.

i Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

i Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Very well. Follow that lord ; and look you mock him not. [Exit *i Player.*] — My good friends, I'll leave you till night : you are welcome to Elsinore.

Rosen. Good my lord !

Ham. Ay, so, God b' wi' ye ! [Exit ROSEN. and GUILD.]

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I !
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working all his visage wann'd ;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspéct,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit?⁸⁴ and all for nothing !
For Hecuba !

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her ? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue?⁸⁵ for passion
That I have ? He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech ;
Make mad the guilty, and appall the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams,⁸⁶ unpregnant of my cause,

⁸⁴ *Conceit* is used by the Poet for *conception* or *imagination*.

⁸⁵ The *hint* or *prompt-word*. "A prompter," says Florio, "one who keepes the booke for the plaiers, and teacheth them their *kue*."

⁸⁶ This John was probably distinguished as a sort of dreaming or droning

And can say nothing ; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward ?
Who calls me villain ? breaks my pate across ?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face ?
Tweaks me by th' nose ? gives me the lie i' the throat,
As deep as to the lungs ?⁸⁷ who does me this, ha ?
'Swounds, I should take it ; for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter ;⁸⁸ or, ere this,
I should have fatted all the region kites⁸⁹
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain !
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless⁹⁰ villain !
O, vengeance !—
Why, what an ass am I ! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by Heaven and Hell,⁹¹
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab, a scullion !
Fie upon't ! foh ! About, my brain !⁹²— I've heard

simpleton or flunkie, or, perhaps, merely an apathetic, sleepy fellow. The only other mention of him that has reached us is in Armin's *Nest of Ninnies*, 1608: "His name is John, indeed, says the cinnick, but neither John a-nods nor *John a-dreams*, yet either, as you take it."

⁸⁷ This was giving one the lie with the most galling additions and terms of insult ; so that the not resenting it would stamp him as the most hopeless of cowards. See vol. x, page 135, note 12.

⁸⁸ "Lack gall to make me feel the bitterness of oppression"; or, perhaps, to make oppression bitter to the oppressor.—The gentleness of doves and pigeons were supposed to proceed from their having no gall in them.

⁸⁹ All the kites of the *airy* region, the sky. See page 212, note 76.

⁹⁰ *Kindless* is *unnatural*. See page 156, note 17.—Observe how Hamlet checks himself in this strain of objuration, and then, in mere shame of what he has just done, turns to ranting at himself for having ranted.

⁹¹ By all the best and all the worst passions of his nature.

⁹² "About, my brain," is nothing more than "*to work, my brain.*" The phrase to go *about* a thing, is still common.

That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They have proclaim'd their malafactions ;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle : I'll observe his looks ;
I'll tent him to the quick : if he but blench,⁹³
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be the Devil : and the Devil hath power
T' assume a pleasing shape ; yea, and perhaps,
Out of my weakness and my melancholy, —
As he is very potent with such spirits, —
Abuses me to damn me.⁹⁴ I'll have grounds
More relative than this :⁹⁵ the play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

[Exit.]

⁹³ To *tent* was to *probe* a wound. To *blench* is to *shrink* or *start*.

⁹⁴ Hamlet was not alone in the suspicion here started. Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*: "I believe that those apparitions and ghosts of departed persons are not the wandering souls of men, but the unquiet walks of devils, prompting and suggesting us into mischief, blood, and villainy; instilling and stealing into our hearts that the blessed spirits are not at rest in their graves, but wander, solicitous of the affairs of the world." — To *abuse* is to *deceive*, or *practise upon* with illusions.

⁹⁵ Grounds standing in closer and clearer relation with the matter alleged by the Ghost.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Elsinore. A Room in the Castle.*

*Enter the King, the Queen, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSEN-
CRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

King. And can you, by no drift of circumstance,¹
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Rosen. He does confess he feels himself distracted ;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guild. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded ;
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well?

Rosen. Most like a gentleman.

Guild. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Rosen. Most free of question,² but of our demands
Niggard in his reply.

Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

Rosen. Madam, it so fell out that certain players
We o'er-raught³ on the way : of these we told him ;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it. They are about the Court ;

¹ Course of indirect, roundabout inquiry.

² Here, *of* is equivalent to *in respect of*. Also in "of our demands." *Question* may mean *inquiry*, or *conversation*; and either of these senses accords with the occasion referred to. See Critical Notes.

³ *O'er-raught* is overtaken ; *raught* being an old form of *reached*.

And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

Polo. 'Tis most true :
And he beseech'd me to entreat your Majesties
To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart ; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclined. —

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Rosen. We shall, my lord. [*Exeunt ROSEN. and GULDEN.*]
King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too ;

For we have closely⁴ sent for Hamlet hither,

That he, as 'twere by accident, may here

Affront⁵ Ophelia.

Her father and myself, lawful espials,
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge ;
And gather by him, as he is behaved,
If't be th' affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you. —
And, for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauty be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness : so shall I hope your virtue
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

Ophe. Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit Queen.*]

Polo. Ophelia, walk you here. — Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves. — [*To OPHE.*] Read on this book ;

⁴ *Closely* is *secretly* ; sent in such a way as not to let Hamlet know from whom the message came : a *got-up* accident.

⁵ *Affront* was sometimes used for *meet*, or, as it is explained a little after, *encounter*. So in *Cymbeline*, iv. 3 : "Your preparation can *affront* no less than what you hear of." See vol. vii. page 248, note 4.

That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. We're oft to blame in this,—
'Tis too much proved,—that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The Devil himself.

King. [Aside.] O, 'tis too true !
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience !
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to⁶ the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word.
O heavy burden !

Polo. I hear him coming : let's withdraw, my lord.

[*Exeunt King and POLONIUS.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. To be, or not to be,—that is the question :
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die,—to sleep,—
No more ; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to,—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die,—to sleep ;—
To sleep ! perchance to dream ! ay, there's the rub ;⁷
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,⁸
Must give us pause : there's the respect

⁶ Not more ugly *in comparison with* the things that helps it.

⁷ *Rub* is *obstruction, hindrance.* A word borrowed from the bowling-alley, where it was used of any thing that deflected the bowl from its aim.

⁸ "This mortal *coil*" is the tumult and bustle of this mortal life ; or, as Wordsworth has it, "the fretful stir unprofitable, and the fever of the world." Perhaps *coil* here means, also, the body.

That makes calamity of so long life ;⁹
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus¹⁰ make
 With a bare bodkin ? who'd these fardels¹¹ bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death, —
 The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
 No traveller returns,¹² — puzzles the will,
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have
 Than fly to others that we know not of ?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all ;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought ;¹³
 And enterprises of great pith and moment,
 With this regard, their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action. — Soft you now !
 The fair Ophelia ! — Nymph, in thy orisons
 Be all my sins remember'd.

⁹ That is, the *consideration* that induces us to undergo the calamity of so long a life. This use of *respect* is very frequent.

¹⁰ The allusion is to the term *quietus est*, used in settling accounts at exchequer audits. So in Sir Thomas Overbury's character of a *Franklin* : "Lastly, to *end* him, he cares not when his *end* comes; he needs not feare his audit, for his *quietus* is in heaven." — *Bodkin* was the ancient term for a small dagger.

¹¹ *Fardel* is an old word for *burden* or *bundle*.

¹² *Bourn* is *boundary*. So in *Troilus and Cressida*, ii. 3: "I will not praise thy wisdom, which, like a *bourn*, a pale, a shore, confines thy spacious and dilated parts." — Of course Hamlet means that, as Coleridge says, "no traveller returns to this world as his home or abiding-place."

¹³ That is, the pale *complexion of grief*. *Thought* was often used in this way. So in *Twelfth Night*, ii. iv: "She pined in *thought*"; that is, she wasted away *through grief*. See, also, page 44, note 40.

Ophe. Good my lord,
How does your Honour for this many a day?

Ham. I humbly thank you ; well, well, well.

Ophe. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longèd long to re-deliver ;
I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, not I ;
I never gave you aught.

Ophe. My honour'd lord, I know right well you did ;
And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed
As made the things more rich : their perfume lost,
Take these again ; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha ! are you honest ?

Ophe. My lord !

Ham. Are you fair ?

Ophe. What means your lordship ?

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should
admit no discourse to your beauty.¹⁴

Ophe. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than
with honesty ?

Ham. Ay, truly ; for the power of beauty will sooner
transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force
of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness : this was
sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did
love you once.

Ophe. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

¹⁴ "Your *chastity* should have no conversation or acquaintance with your
beauty." This use of *honesty* for *chastity* is very frequent in Shakespeare.—
It should be noted, that in these speeches Hamlet refers, not to Ophelia
personally, but to the sex in general. So, especially, when he says, "I have
heard of your paintings too," he does not mean that Ophelia paints, but that
the use of painting is common with her sex.

Ham. You should not have believed me ; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it :¹⁵ I loved you not.

Ophe. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery : why wouldest thou be a breeder of sinners ? I am myself indifferent honest ;¹⁶ but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better my mother had not borne me : I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious ; with more offences at my beck¹⁷ than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven ? We are arrant knaves, all ; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's thy father ?

Ophe. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

Ophe. [Aside.] O, help him, you sweet Heavens !

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry : Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go ; farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool ; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go ; and quickly too. Farewell.

Ophe. [Aside.] O heavenly powers, restore him !

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough ; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another : you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance.¹⁸ Go

¹⁵ " Cannot so penetrate and purify our nature, but that we shall still have a strong taste of our native badness."

¹⁶ " *Indifferent honest* " is tolerably honest. See page 199, note 31.

¹⁷ That is, " ready to come about me on a signal of permission."

¹⁸ Johnson explains this, " You mistake by wanton affectation, and pre-

to, I'll no more on't ; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages : those that are married already, all but one, shall live ; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.¹⁹

[Exit.]

Ophe. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown !
The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword ;
Th' expectancy and rose of the fair State,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,²⁰
Th' observed of all observers,— quite, quite down !
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh ;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me,
T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see !

Re-enter the King and POLONIUS.

King. Love ! his affections do not that way tend ;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,

tend to mistake by *ignorance*." Moberly, " You use ambiguous words, as if you did not know their meaning."

¹⁹ Throughout the latter part of this fine scene, Hamlet's disorder runs to a very high pitch, and he seems to take an insane delight in lacerating the gentle creature before him. Yet what keenness and volubility of wit ! what energy and swiftness of discourse ! the intellectual forces in a fiery gallop, while the social feelings seem totally benumbed. And when Ophelia meets his question, " Where's your father ? " with the reply, " At home, my lord," how quickly he darts upon the true meaning of her presence ! The sweet, innocent girl, who knows not how to word an untruth, having never tried on a lie in her life, becomes embarrassed in her part ; and from her manner Hamlet instantly gathers what is on foot, and forthwith shapes his speech so as to sting the eavesdroppers.

²⁰ This is well explained in what Lady Percy says of her lost Hotspur, in *a King Henry IV*, ii. 3 : " By his light did all the chivalry of England move ; he was indeed the glass wherein the noble youth did dress themselves."

O'er which his melancholy sits on brood ;
 And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
 Will be some danger ; which for to prevent,
 I have in quick determination
 Thus set it down : He shall with speed to England,
 For the demand of our neglected tribute :
 Haply, the seas, and countries different,
 With variable objects, shall expel
 This something-settled matter in his heart,
 Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
 From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

Polo. It shall do well : but yet do I believe
 The origin and commencement of his grief
 Sprung from neglected love. — How now, Ophelia !
 You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said ;
 We heard it all. — My lord, do as you please ;
 But, if you hold it fit, after the play
 Let his Queen mother all alone entreat him
 To show his grief : let her be round with him ;
 And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
 Of all their conference. If she find him not,
 To England send him ; or confine him where
 Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so :
 Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Same. A Hall in the Castle.*

*Enter HAMLET and several Players.*¹

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it
 to you, trippingly on the tongue : but, if you mouth it, as

¹ "This dialogue of Hamlet with the players," says Coleridge, "is one of the happiest instances of Shakespeare's power of diversifying the scene while he is carrying on the plot."

many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus ; but use all gently : for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings ;² who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipp'd for o'erdoing Termagant ; it out-herods Herod :³ pray you, avoid it.

I Play. I warrant your Honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor : suit the action to the word, the word to the action ; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature : for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature ; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.⁴ Now, this overdone, or come tardy of,⁵ though it make the

² The ancient theatres were far from the commodious, elegant structures which later times have seen. The *pit* was, truly, what its name denotes, an unfloored space in the area of the house, sunk considerably beneath the level of the stage. Hence this part of the audience were called *groundlings*.

³ *Termagant* is the name given in old romances to the tempestuous god of the Saracens. He is usually joined with *Mahound*, or Mahomet. John Florio calls him " *Termigisto*, a great boaster, quarreller, killer, tamer, or ruler of the universe ; the child of the earthquake and of the thunder, the brother of death." Hence this personage was introduced into the old Miracle-plays as a demon of outrageous and violent demeanour. The murder of the innocents was a favourite subject for a Miracle-play ; and wherever Herod is introduced, he plays the part of a vaunting braggart, a tyrant of tyrants, and does indeed *outdo Termagant*.

⁴ *Pressure* is *impression* here ; as when, in i. 5 : Hamlet says, " I'll wipe away all forms, all *pressures* past."

⁵ To " come tardy of " a thing is the same as to come short of it.

unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve ; the censure of the which one must, in your allowance,⁶ o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor Turk, have so strutted and bellowed, that I have thought some of Nature's journeymen had made them, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

I Play. I hope we have reform'd that indifferently with us, sir.

Ham. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your Clowns speak no more than is set down for them : for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too ; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered : that's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the Fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.—

[*Exeunt* Players.]

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my lord ! will the King hear this piece of work ?

Polo. And the Queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste. [*Exit* POLONIUS.] — Will you two help to hasten them ?

Rosen. } We will, my lord.
Guild. }

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. What, ho, Horatio !

⁶ "The *censure* of the *which one*" means the *judgment* of *one of which*, or of *whom*. This use of *censure* is very frequent. — *Allowance* is *estimation* or *approval*. To *approve* is the more frequent meaning of to *allow*, in Shakespeare. And so in the Bible; as, "The Lord *alloweth* the righteous."

Enter Horatio.

Hora. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

Hora. O, my dear lord,—

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter ;
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue⁷ hast but thy good spirits,
To feed and clothe thee ? Why should the poor be flatter'd ?
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant⁸ hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear ?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself : for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing ;
A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks : and blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee. Something too much of this.
There is a play to-night before the King :
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death.
I pr'ythee, when thou seest that act a-foot,

⁷ Here, and generally, though not always, in Shakespeare, *revenue* has the accent on the second syllable. And so, I believe, it is uniformly sounded by all the other English poets. So, too, Webster, Choate, and Everett always spoke it. See vol. iii. page 13, note 20.

⁸ *Pregnant* is *ready, prompt*.—*Candied* is *sugared*; a tongue steeped in the sweetness of adulation.—*Thrift* is *profit*; the gold that flatterers lie for.

Even with the very comment of thy soul
 Observe my uncle : if his occulted guilt
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
 It is a damnèd ghost that we have seen ;
 And my imaginations are as foul
 As Vulcan's stithy.⁹ Give him heedful note :
 For I mine eyes will rivet to his face ;
 And, after, we will both our judgments join
 In censure of his seeming.

Hora. Well, my lord ;
 If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
 And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They're coming to the play ; I must be idle :¹⁰
 Get you a place.

*Danish march. A Flourish. Enter the King, the Queen,
 POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and
 others.*

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet ?

Ham. Excellent, i'faith ; of the chameleon's dish : I eat
 the air, promise-cramm'd :¹¹ you cannot feed capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet ; these
 words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now. — [To POLONIUS.] My lord, you
 played once i' the University, you say ?

Polo. That did I, my lord ; and was accounted a good
 actor.

⁹ Vulcan's workshop or *smithy* ; *stith* being an *anvil*.

¹⁰ Must *seem* idle ; must behave as if his mind were purposeless, or intent
 upon nothing in particular.

¹¹ Because the chameleon was supposed to live on air. In fact, this and
 various other reptiles will live a long time without any visible food. So in
Othello, iii. 3 : " I had rather be a toad, and *live upon the vapour* of a dun-
 geon," &c. — The King snuffs offence in " I eat the air, promise-cramm'd,"
 as implying that he has not kept his promise to Hamlet.

Ham. And what did you enact?

Polo. I did enact Julius Cæsar : I was kill'd i' the Capitol ;
Brutus kill'd me.¹²

Ham. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf
there.¹³ — Be the players ready ?

Rosen. Ay, my lord ; they stay upon your patience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother ; here's metal more attractive.

Polo. [To the King.] O, ho ! do you mark that ?

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap ?

[*Lying down at Ophelia's feet.*

Ophe. No, my lord.

Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap ?

Ophe. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Do you think I meant country matters ?

Ophe. I think nothing, my lord.

Ham. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

Ophe. What is, my lord ?

Ham. Nothing.

Ophe. You are merry, my lord.

Ham. Who, I ?

Ophe. Ay, my lord.

Ham. O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man
do but be merry ? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother
looks, and my father died within's¹⁴ two hours.

Ophe. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long ? Nay, then let the Devil wear black, for

¹² A Latin play on Cæsar's death was performed at Christ's Church, Oxford, in 1582. Malone thinks that there was an English play on the same subject previous to Shakespeare's. Cæsar was killed in *Pompey's portico*, and not in the Capitol ; but the error is at least as old as Chaucer's time.

¹³ He *acted* the part of a brute. — The play on *Capitol* and *capital* is obvious enough.

¹⁴ *Within's* is a contraction of *within this*. The Poet has some contractions even harsher than this.

I'll have a suit of sabell.¹⁵ O Heavens ! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet ? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year : but, by'r Lady, he must build churches, then ; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is, *For O, for O, the hobby-horse is forgot.*¹⁶

Hautboys play. The Dumb-show enters.

*Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly ; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck ; lays him down upon a bank of flowers : she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns ; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts : she seems loth and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.*¹⁷

[*Exeunt.*

¹⁵ *Sabell* is a flame-colour. A writer in *The Critic* for 1854, page 373, remarks that " *sabell* or *sabelle* is properly a fawn-colour a good deal heightened with red, and that the term came from the French *couleur d'isabelle*." According to the *Dictionary of the French Academy*, *isabelle* is a colour " between white and yellow, but with the yellow predominating." It is therefore a very showy, flaring colour ; as far as possible from mourning.

¹⁶ The *Hobby-horse* was a part of the old Morris-dance, which was used in the May-games. It was the figure of a horse fastened round a man's waist, the man's legs going through the horse's body, and enabling him to walk, but covered by a long footcloth ; while false legs appeared where those of the man's should be, astride the horse. The Puritans waged a furious war against the Morris-dance ; which caused the Hobby-horse to be left out of it : hence the burden of a song, which passed into a proverb. See vol. iv. page 46, note 5.

¹⁷ As the King does not take fire at this Dumb-show, we may suppose him to be so engrossed with some about him, that he does not mark it.

Ophe. What means this, my lord?

Ham. Marry, this is miching mallecho;¹⁸ it means mischief.

Ophe. Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue.

Ham. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.¹⁹

Ophe. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Ham. Ay, or any show that you'll show him: be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

Ophe. You are naught,²⁰ you are naught; I'll mark the play.

Prologue. *For us, and for our tragedy,*
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.

[Exit.]

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posy²¹ of a ring?

Ophe. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter a King and a Queen.

P. King. *Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart²² gone round*
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbèd ground,

¹⁸ *Miching mallecho* is lurking mischief or evil-doing. To *mich*, for to skulk, to lurk, was an old English verb in common use in Shakespeare's time; and *mallecho* or *malhecho*, *misdeed*, he borrowed from the Spanish.

¹⁹ Hamlet is running a high strain of jocularity with Ophelia, in order to hide his purpose. The wit here turns upon the fact, that an actor's business is speaking; blurting out before the world what would else be unknown; as dramatic personages are always supposed to be speaking, as *without an audience*, what an audience is nevertheless listening to. Hence they are ever blabbing to the public the things they confide to each other.

²⁰ That is, *naughty, bad; not nothing or nought.*

²¹ The *posy* is the *motto*, or words inscribed, and of course very brief.

²² *Cart, car, and chariot* were used indiscriminately.—"The style," says Coleridge, "of the interlude here is distinguished from the real dialogue by rhyme, as in the first interview with the players by epic verse."

*And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.*

P. Queen. *So many journeys may the Sun and Moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done !
But, woe is me ! you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you.²³ Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must :
For women's fear and love hold quantity ;²⁴
In neither aught, or in extremity.*

*Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know ;
And as my love is sized, my fear is so :
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear ;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.*

P. King. *Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too ;
My operant²⁵ powers their functions leave to do :
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, beloved ; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou —*

P. Queen. *O, confound the rest !
Such love must needs be treason in my breast :
In second husband let me be accurst !
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.*

Ham. [Aside.] Wormwood, wormwood.

P. Queen. *The instances²⁶ that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love :*

²³ "Distrust your health"; "am solicitous about you."

²⁴ "Hold quantity" is *have equal strength*.

²⁵ *Operant* for *active* or *operative*. So in *Timon of Athens*, iv. 3: "Sauce his palate with thy most *operant* poison."

²⁶ *Instances* for *inducements*. In the next line, *respects* is *considerations* or *motives*, as usual in Shakespeare.

*A second time I kill my husband dead
When second husband kisses me in bed.*

P. King. *I do believe you think what now you speak;*

But what we do determine oft we break.

Purpose is but the slave to memory,

Of violent birth, but poor validity;

Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,

But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.

Most necessary²⁷ 'tis that we forget

To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:

What to ourselves in passion we propose,

The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.

The violence of either grief or joy

Their own enactures²⁸ with themselves destroy :

Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;

Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.

This world is not for aye; nor 'tis not strange

That even our loves should with our fortunes change;

For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,

Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.

The great man down, you mark, his favourite flies;

The poor advanced makes friends of enemies :

And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;

For who not needs shall never lack a friend;

And who in want a hollow friend doth try,

Directly seasons him his enemy.

But, orderly to end where I begun,

Our wills and fates do so contrary run,

That our devices still are overthrown;

Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own :²⁹

So think thou wilt no second husband wed;

²⁷ Necessary here means natural or unavoidable. Repeatedly so.

²⁸ Enactures for determinations; what they enact.

²⁹ That is, we can control our thoughts, but not their results.

But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

P. Queen. *Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light !
Sport and repose lock from me day and night !
To desperation turn my trust and hope !
An anchor's cheer³⁰ in prison be my scope !
Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,³¹
Meet what I would have well, and it destroy !
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife !*

Ham. If she should break it now !

P. King. *'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile :
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep.* [Sleeps.

P. Queen. *Sleep rock thy brain ;
And never come mischance between us twain !* [Exit.

Ham. Madam, how like you this play ?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Ham. O, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument ? Is there no offence in't ?

Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest ; no offence i' the world.

King. What do you call the play ?

Ham. *The Mouse-trap.* Marry, how ? Tropically.³² This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna : Gonzago is the King's name ; his wife, Baptista : you shall see anon ; 'tis a knavish piece of work : but what o' that ? your Majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not : let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.³³

³⁰ A *hermit's fare*, or *diet*. *Anchor* for *anchoret*, an old word for *hermit*.

³¹ To *blank* the face is to make it *white* ; to take the blood out of it. The proper colour of joy is *ruddy*.

³² *Tropically* is *figuratively*, or in the way of *trope*.

³³ The allusion is to a horse wincing as the saddle galls his withers.

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King.

Ophe. You are as good as a chorus,³⁴ my lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love,³⁵ if I could see the puppets dallying.

Ophe. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

Ham. It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

Ophe. Still better, and worse.

Ham. So you must take your husbands.—Begin, murderer; pox! leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come: *The croaking raven doth bellow for revenge*.³⁶

Luc. *Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;*

*Confederate season, else no creature seeing:*³⁷

Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,

With Hecate's ban thrice blasted,³⁸ thrice infected,

Thy natural magic and dire property

On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears.

Ham. He poisons him i' the garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ in choice Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Ophe. The King rises!

³⁴ The use to which Shakespeare put the *chorus* may be seen in *King Henry V.* Every motion or puppet-show was accompanied by an *interpreter* or showman.

³⁵ *Love for lover*; a very common usage.

³⁶ "The croaking raven," &c., is probably a quotation from some play then well known. The raven's croak was thought to be ill-boding.

³⁷ No creature but time looking on, and that a confederate in the act, or conspiring with the murderer.

³⁸ Poisonous weeds were supposed to be more poisonous if gathered in the night. *Hecate* was the name given to the Queen of the witches; and her *banning* or cursing brought the poison to the highest intensity.

Ham. What, frightened with false fire !

Queen. How fares my lord ?

Polo. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light ! — away !

All. Lights, lights, lights !

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.*]

Ham. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungallèd play ;³⁹

For some must watch while some must sleep :

So runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers,⁴⁰ — if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me, — with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes,⁴¹ get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir ?⁴²

Hora. Half a share.⁴³

³⁹ It is said that a deer, when badly wounded, retires from the herd, and goes apart, to weep and die. Of course, *hart* is the same as *deer*, and *ungallèd* the opposite of *stricken*.

⁴⁰ Alluding, probably, to a custom which the London players had in Shakespeare's time, of flaunting it in gaudy apparel, and with *plumes* in their caps, the more the better. So in Chapman's *Monsieur D'Olive*, 1606, iii. 1: "Three of these *goldfinches* I have entertained for my followers: I am ashamed to train 'em abroad; they say I carry a whole *forest of feathers* with me." It was matter of complaint with some, that many "proud players jet in their silks." — To *turn Turk* with any one was to *desert* or *betray* him, or turn traitor to him. A common phrase of the time.

⁴¹ *Provincial* roses took their name from *Provins*, in Lower Brie, and not from *Provence*. *Razed* shoes are most probably *embroidered* shoes. To *race*, or *raze*, was to *stripe*.

⁴² "A *fellowship* in a *cry of players*" is a *partnership* in a *company* of players. The Poet repeatedly uses *cry* thus for *set*, *pack*, or *troop*. The word was borrowed from the chase, as hounds were selected for a pack according to their barking tones. See vol. iii. page 71, note 13.

⁴³ The players were paid not by salaries, but by *shares* or portions of the profit, according to merit. Perhaps, however, the allusion is rather to the custom, then in vogue, of making the theatrical property a joint-stock affair. Thus Shakespeare himself was a stockholder in the Globe theatre, and so had not only his portion of the profits as one of the players, but also an income from the money invested, or from the shares he held in the stock.

Ham. A whole one, ay.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself ;⁴⁴ and now reigns here
A very, very — pajock.⁴⁵

Hora. You might have rhymed.⁴⁶

Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the Ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Hora. Very well, my lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning, —

Hora. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ha ! — Come, some music ! come, the recorders !⁴⁷ —

For if the King like not the comedy,
Why, then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.⁴⁸ —

Come, some music !

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

⁴⁴ The meaning is, that Denmark was robbed of a king who had the majesty of Jove. — Hamlet calls Horatio Damon, in allusion to the famous friendship of Damon and Pythias.

⁴⁵ *Pajock* is probably an old form of *peacock*. Dyce says he has "often heard the lower classes in the north of Scotland call the peacock *peajock*." Editors have been greatly in the dark as to the reason of the word's being used here. But a writer in *The Edinburgh Review*, October, 1872, shows that in the popular belief of Shakespeare's time the peacock had a very bad character, "being, in fact, the accredited representative of inordinate pride and envy, as well as of unnatural cruelty and lust." And he quotes from what was then the most popular manual of natural history: "The peacocke, as one sayth, hath the voice of a feend, the head of a serpent, and the pace of a theefe." The writer adds that "in the whole fauna of the time Hamlet could not have selected the name of bird or beast that expressed with greater emphasis the hateful union of corrupted passion and evil life that now usurped the throne of Denmark."

⁴⁶ *Ass* was often used as a rhyme to *was*.

⁴⁷ The recorder was a soft-toned instrument, something like the flute. See vol. iii. page 81, note 12.

⁴⁸ *Perdy* is an old corruption of the French *par Dieu*.

Guild. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guild. The King, sir, —

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him ?

Guild. Is, in his retirement, marvellous distemper'd.

Ham. With drink, sir ?

Guild. No, my lord, with choler.

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor ; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into more choler.

Guild. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, sir : pronounce.

Guild. The Queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guild. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment ; if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guild. What, my lord ?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer ; my wit's diseased : but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command ; or, rather, as you say, my mother : therefore no more, but to the matter : My mother, you say, —

Rosen. Then thus she says : Your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.⁴⁹

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother ! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration ? Impart.

Rosen. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

⁴⁹ *Admiration*, again, in its proper Latin sense of *wonder*.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother.
Have you any further trade with us?

Rosen. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.⁵⁰

Rosen. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper?
you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you
deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Rosen. How can that be, when you have the voice of the
King himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, sir, but, *While the grass grows*,—the proverb
is something musty.⁵¹—

Re-enter Players with recorders.

O, the recorders! let me see one.—To withdraw with you:
[Takes GUILD. aside.] Why do you go about to recover the
wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?⁵²

Guild. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is
too unmannerly.⁵³

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play
upon this pipe?

Guild. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Gnild. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

⁵⁰ This is explained by a clause in the Church Catechism: "To keep
my hands from *picking and stealing*."—In "So I do still," *so* is emphatic,
and strongly ironical.

⁵¹ "The musty proverb" is, "Whylst grass doth growe, oft sterves the
seely steede."

⁵² "To recover the wind of me" is a term borrowed from hunting, and
means to take advantage of the animal pursued, by getting to the windward
of it, that it may not scent its pursuers.—*Toil* is *snare*, or *trap*.

⁵³ Hamlet may well say, "I do not well understand that." The mean-
ing, however, seems to be, "If I am using an unmannerly boldness with
you, it is my love that makes me do so."

Guild. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.⁵⁴

Guild. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be play'd on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me,⁵⁵ you cannot play upon me.—

Re-enter POLONIUS.

God bless you, sir!

Polo. My lord, the Queen would speak with you, and presently.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Polo. By the Mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Polo. It is backed like a weasel.

Ham. Or like a whale?

Polo. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then will I come to my mother by-and-by.—

⁵⁴ The *ventages* are the holes of the pipe. *Stops* signifies the mode of stopping the ventages so as to make the notes.

⁵⁵ Hamlet keeps up the allusion to a musical instrument. The *frets* of a lute or guitar are the ridges crossing the finger-board, upon which the strings are pressed or *stopped*. A quibble is intended on *fret*.

[*Aside.*] They fool me to the top of my bent.⁵⁶ — I will come by-and-by.

Polo. I will say so.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

Ham. *By-and-by* is easily said. — Leave me, friends. —

[*Exeunt* all but HAMLET.]

'Tis now the very witching-time of night,
When churchyards yawn,⁵⁷ and Hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother. —
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero⁵⁸ enter this firm bosom:
Let me be cruel, not unnatural.
I will speak daggers to her, but use none;
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites:
How in my words soever she be shent,⁵⁹
To give them seals never, my soul, consent!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—*A Room in the Castle.*

Enter the King, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. I like him not; nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you:

⁵⁶ They *humour* me to the *full height* of my inclination. Polonius has been using the method, common in the treatment of crazy people, of assenting to all that Hamlet says. This is what Hamlet refers to.

⁵⁷ Churchyards *yawn* to let forth the ghosts, who did all their walking in the night. And the crimes which darkness so often covers might well be spoken of as caused by the nocturnal contagion of Hell.

⁵⁸ Nero is aptly referred to here, as he was the murderer of his mother, Agrippina. It may be worth noting that the name of the King in this play is *Claudius*; and that, after the death of Domitius her husband, Agrippina married with her uncle the Emperor Claudius.

⁵⁹ To *shend* is to *injure*, whether by reproof, blows, or otherwise. Shakespeare generally uses *shent* for *reproved*, threatened with angry words. "To give his words *seals*:" is therefore to carry his punishment beyond *reproof*. The allusion is to the sealing of a deed to render it effective.

I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you.
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.

Guild. We will ourselves provide :
Most holy and religious fear it is
To keep those many many bodies safe
That live and feed upon your Majesty.

Rosen. The single and peculiar life is bound,
With all the strength and armour of the mind
To keep itself from 'noyance ; but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest
The lives of many. The cease of majesty
Dies not alone ;¹ but, like a gulf, doth draw
What's near it with it : 'tis a massy wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortised and adjoin'd ; which when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boisterous ruin. Ne'er alone
Did the King sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage ;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

Rosen. }
Guild. }

We will haste us.

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

Enter POLONIUS.

Polo. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet.
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,

¹ Tautological in word, but not in sense. The cease (*decease*) of majesty comes not alone.

To hear the process ; I'll warrant she'll tax him home :²
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech of vantage.³ Fare you well, my liege :
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

King. Thanks, dear my lord. — [Exit POLONIUS.]
O, my offence is rank, it smells to Heaven ;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder ! Pray can I not :
Though inclination be as sharp as will,
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent ;⁴
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both⁵ neglect. What if this cursèd hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet Heavens
To wash it white as snow ? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence ?
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestallèd ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down ?⁶ Then I'll look up ;

² *Home* as a general intensive, meaning *thoroughly, to the utmost.*

³ Speech having an advantage in that nature makes the speakers partial to each other. This favours the conclusion that the Queen was not privy and consenting to the murder of Hamlet's father. Both the King and Polonius have some distrust of her.

⁴ "Though I were not only willing but strongly inclined to pray, my guilt would prevent me." The distinction here implied is philosophically just. The inclination is the craving or the impulse to assuage his pangs of remorse; the will is the determination of the reason or judgment in a question of duty and right.

⁵ *Both* refers to the *two matters* of business implied in *double*.

⁶ That is, either to be *prevented from falling*, or to be pardoned *after we have fallen*. Alluding to a part of the Lord's Prayer.

My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
 Can serve my turn? *Forgive me my foul murder?*
 That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,
 My crown, mine own ambition, and my Queen.
 May one be pardon'd, and retain th' offence?
 In the corrupted 'currents of this world
 Offence's gilded hand may shove-by justice;
 And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies
 In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?⁷
 Try what repentance can? what can it not?
 Yet what can it when one can not repent?
 O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
 O limèd soul,⁸ that, struggling to be free,
 Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay!
 Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!
 All may be well.⁹

[Retires and kneels.

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
 And now I'll do't.—And so he goes to Heaven!
 And so am I revenged? That would be scann'd:¹⁰

⁷ "What *remains* to be done?" or, "What *else* can I do?"

⁸ Alluding to an old mode of catching birds, by spreading upon the twigs, where they are likely to light, a sticky substance called *bird-lime*. See vol. iv. page 200, note 10.

⁹ The final "All may be well" is remarkable;—the degree of merit attributed by the self-flattering soul to its own struggles, though baffled, and to the indefinite half promise, half command, to persevere in religious duties.—COLERIDGE.

¹⁰ That *should* be *scrutinized*. See page 146, note 11.

A villain kills my father ; and, for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To Heaven.

Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly-full of bread ;
With all his crimes¹¹ broad blown, as flush as May ;
And how his audit stands who knows save Heaven ?
But, in our circumstance and course of thought,¹²
'Tis heavy with him : and am I, then, revenged,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage ?

No !

Up, sword ; and know thou a more horrid hent :¹³
When he is drunk-asleep, or in his rage ;
Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed ;
At gaming, swearing ; or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't :
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at Heaven ;
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As Hell, whereto it goes.¹⁴ My mother stays :

¹¹ *Crimes* in the more general sense of *sins*. So twice before in this play : "The foul *crimes* done in my days of nature"; and, "Having ever seen in the predominate *crimes* the youth you breathe of."

¹² "Circumstance and course of thought" seems to mean the particular data or circumstantial detail of things from which our thought shapes its course and draws its conclusions.

¹³ *Hent*, both noun and verb, was used in the sense of *seizure, grasp, or hold*. Here it has the kindred sense of *purpose*.

¹⁴ Hamlet here flies off to a sort of *ideal* revenge, in order to quiet his filial feelings without crossing his reason. Yet it is a very mark-worthy fact, that the King is taken at last in the perpetration of crimes far worse than any that Hamlet here anticipates. But that, to be sure, is the Poet's ordering of the matter, and perhaps should be regarded as expressing *his* sense of justice in this case; though Hamlet may well be supposed to have a presentiment, that a man so bad, and so secure in his badness, will not rest where he is; but will proceed to some further exploiting in crime, in the midst of which judgment will at last overtake him.

This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.¹⁵ [Exit.
 [The King rises and advances.

King. My words fly up, my thoughts remain below :
 Words without thoughts never to Heaven go. [Exit.

SCENE IV.—*The Queen's Chamber.*

Enter the Queen and POLONIUS.

Polo. He will come straight. Look you lay home to him :
 Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with ;
 And that your Grace hath screen'd and stood between
 Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.
 Pray you, be round with him.

Ham. [Within.] Mother, mother, mother !

Queen. I'll warrant you ;
 Fear me not : withdraw, I hear him coming.

[POLONIUS goes behind the arras.

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now, mother, what's the matter ?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended.

Queen. Come, come ; you answer with an idle tongue.

Ham. Go, go ; you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet ! what's the matter now ?
 Have you forgot me ?

Ham. No, by the Rood,¹ not so :
 You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife ;
 And — would it were not so ! — you are my mother.

Queen. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

¹⁵ *This physic* refers to the reasons Hamlet has been giving for not striking now ; a medicine that prolongs the King's sickness, but does not heal it ; that is, the purpose is delayed, not abandoned.

¹ *Rood* is an old word for *cross* ; often used for an oath, as here.

Ham. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge:

You go not till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?—
Help, help, ho!

Polo. [Behind.] What, ho! help, help, help!

Ham. [Drawing.] How now! a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead! [Makes a pass through the arras.]

Polo. [Behind.] O, I am slain! [Falls and dies.]

Queen. O me! what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know not: is it the King?

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

Ham. A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a king!

Ham. Ay, lady, 'twas my word.—

[Lifts up the arras, and sees POLONIUS.]

Thou wretched, rash-intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;

Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.—

Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down,

And let me wring your heart: for so I shall,

If it be made of penetrable stuff;

If damnèd custom have not brass'd it so,

That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

Queen. What have I done, that thou darest wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?

Ham. Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
Calls virtue hypocrite;² takes off the rose

² A thing is often said to do that which it any way causes to be done
See vol. xi. page 231, note 21.

From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there ; makes marriage-vows
As false as dicers' oaths : O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul,³ and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words ! heaven's face doth glow ;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,⁴
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

Queen. Ah me, what act,
That roars so loud, and thunders in the index? ⁵

Ham. Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment⁶ of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow ;
Hyperion's curls ; the front of Jove himself⁷ ;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command ;
A station⁸ like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill ;

⁸ *Contraction* here means the *marriage contract*; of which Hamlet holds religion to be the life and soul, insomuch that without this it is but as a lifeless body, and must soon become a nuisance.

⁴ That is the Earth. Hamlet in his high-wrought stress of passion, kindling as he goes on, makes the fine climax, that not only the heavenly powers burn with indignation, but even the gross beings of this world are smitten with grief and horror, as if the day of judgment were at hand.

⁵ The *index*, or table of contents, was formerly placed at the beginning of books. In *Othello*, ii. 1, we have, "an *index* and obscure *prologue* to the history of lust and foul thoughts."

⁶ *Counterfeit presentment*, or *counterfeit* simply, was used for *likeness*. It is to be supposed that Hamlet wears a miniature of his father, while his mother wears one of the present King. See vol. iii. page 174, note 24.

⁷ The statues of Jupiter represented him as the most intellectual of all the gods, as Apollo was the most beautiful; while in Mercury we have the ideal of swiftness and dispatch.

⁸ Station does not here mean the spot where any one is placed, but the *act of standing, the attitude*. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, iii. 3: "Her motion and her station are as one."

A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man :
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows :
Here is your husband ; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother.⁹ Have you eyes ?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten¹⁰ on this moor ? Ha ! have you eyes ?
You cannot call it love ; for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment : and what judgment
Would step from this to this ? Sense, sure, you have,
Else could you not have motion ; but, sure, that sense
Is apoplex'd :¹¹ for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,
But it reserved some quantity of choice,¹²
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind ?¹³
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense

⁹ The allusion is to the blasted ears of corn that destroyed the full and good ears, in Pharaoh's dream ; *Genesis*, xli. 5-7.

¹⁰ To *batten* is to *feed rankly* or *grossly* ; it is usually applied to the fattening of animals.

¹¹ There is some confusion here, owing to the different meanings with which *sense* is used. The first *sense* is *sensation* ; the second refers to the mind. In our usage, the word *brain* would best combine those meanings, thus : "You have *brains*, else you could not have motion ; but, surely, your *brain* is palsied." The idea seems to be, that her mind is not merely untuned, as in madness, but absolutely quenched or gone.—In "madness would not err," the meaning is, "madness would not *so* err."

¹² Sense was never so *dominated* by the delusions of *insanity*, but that it still retained some *power* of choice. We have before had *quantity* in much the same sense. See page 232, note 24.

¹³ *Hoodman-blind* is the old game of *blindman's-buff*.

Could not so mope.¹⁴
O shame ! where is thy blush ? Rebellious Hell,
If thou canst mutine¹⁵ in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire :¹⁶ proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.

¹⁴ To mope is to be dull and stupid.

¹⁵ *Mutine* for *mutiny*. This is the old form of the verb. Shakespeare calls *mutineers* *mutines* in a subsequent scene.

¹⁶ Another instance like that of note 11; there being a confusion of the fire which is indeed the life of virtue with that which consumes her. For *her own* clearly refers to *virtue*; else the words *in her own fire* are much worse than useless, as having no effect but to clog or cloud the meaning; and if, as some do, we take them as referring to *youth*, we then have the poor platitude, "to the fire of youth let virtue be as wax, and melt in the fire of youth." Now *virtue's own fire* can hardly mean the fire that consumes virtue. But there is, in the moral sense, a fire that cleanses and preserves, and there is also a fire that corrupts and destroys; and the text involves a verbal identification of the two. So that we have here a very pregnant note of the Poet's, or of Hamlet's, ethical creed. For virtue is not a cold, calculating thing: she is a *passion*, or she is truly nothing: she must have her altar, and her vestal fire ever burning there, else she will die: as the author of *Ecce Homo* observes, "No heart is pure that is not passionate; no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic." And the generous, or, if you please, the romantic, fire of young enthusiasm is truly the vestal flame in and by which virtue lives. But the case is indeed wellnigh desperate, when impurity usurps the passion that rightly belongs to purity, and when virtue perishes by the fire of her own altar. And the very pith of Hamlet's censure is, that the sacred fire of noble passion, which burns so sparingly in youth,—a fire kindled and fed with the idea of moral beauty; — that this fire has, in his mother's matron age, inverted itself into the unholy and destructive fire of lust.—Several persons have snapped me rather sharply for taking this view of the text; but perhaps there are some things in Shakespeare, and in Nature, which they have yet to learn. See vol. iv, page 30, note 14.

¹⁷ That is, spots *ingrained*, or dyed in the grain.—*Tinct* is colour.

As will not leave their tinct.

Ham. Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an *enseamèd* bed,¹⁸
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty,—

Queen. O, speak to me no more !
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears :
No more, sweet Hamlet !

Ham. A murderer and a villain ;
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord ; a Vice of kings ;¹⁹
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,²⁰
And put it in his pocket !

Queen. No more !

Ham. A king of shreds and patches,—

Enter the Ghost.

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards ! — What would your gracious figure ?

Queen. Alas, he's mad !

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,

¹⁸ *Enseamed* is a term borrowed from falconry. *Seam* is fat or grease. Hawks, when kept in mew, became, through inaction and high-feeding, *enseamed*, as it was called, that is, too fat or gross for flight; and, in order to fit them for use, their grossness had to be purged off by a course of scouring diet and medicine. The place where the hawks were kept during this process was apt to get very foul. It is in allusion to this that Hamlet applies the term to the moral pollution of his mother's incestuous marriage, and to the bridal couch itself as being defiled by such a union.

¹⁹ An allusion to the old Vice or jester, a stereotyped character in the Moral-plays, which were going out of use in the Poet's time. The Vice wore a motley or patchwork dress; hence the *shreds and patches* applied in this instance. See vol. ix. page 202, note 8.

²⁰ This should not be taken as meaning that Claudius is not the lawful King of Denmark. He "stole the diadem," not by an act of direct usurpation, but by murdering the rightful holder of it.

That, lapsed in time and passion,²¹ lets go by
Th' important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

Ghost. Do not forget: this visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look, amazement on thy mother sits:
O, step between her and her fighting soul!
Conceit in weakest bodies²² strongest works.
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you, lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with th' incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in th' alarm,
Your bedded hairs, like life in excrements,²³
Start up and stand on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

Ham. On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable.²⁴ — Do not look upon me;
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern affects:²⁵ then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears, perchance, for blood.

²¹ The sense appears to be, having failed in *respect* both of time and of purpose. Or it may be, having allowed passion to cool by lapse of time.

²² *Conceit*, again, for *conception, imagination*. *Bodies* is here put for *minds, or persons*; as *corpora* also is in classical Latin.

²³ That is, like excrements *alive*, or having *life in them*. *Hair, nails, feathers, &c.*, were called *excrements*, as being without life.

²⁴ Would put sense and understanding into them. The use of *capable* for *susceptible, intelligent*, is not peculiar to Shakespeare.

²⁵ *Affects* is repeatedly used by Shakespeare for *affections* or *passions*, and may signify any mood or temper of mind looking to action. Hamlet is afraid lest the "piteous action" of the Ghost should make his stern mood

Queen. To whom do you speak this?

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

Queen. Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen. No, nothing but ourselves.

Ham. Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!

My father, in his habit as he lived!

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[*Exit Ghost.*]

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain:

This bodiless creation ecstasy

Is very cunning in.²⁶

Ham. Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music: 'tis not madness
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word; which madness
Would gambol from.²⁷ Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks:

of revenge give place to tenderness, so that he will see the ministry enjoined upon him in a false light, and go to shedding tears instead of blood.

²⁶ The Ghost in this scene, as also in the banquet-scene of *Macbeth*, is plainly what we should call a *subjective* ghost; that is, existing only in the heated imagination of the beholder. As the Queen says, insanity is very fertile in such "bodiless creations." It is not so with the apparition in the former scenes, as the Ghost is there seen by other persons. To be sure, it was part of the old belief, that ghosts could, if they chose, make themselves visible only to those with whom they were to deal; but this is just what we mean by *subjective*. The ancients could not take the idea of subjective visions, as we use the term. So that the words here put into the Ghost's mouth are to be regarded as merely the echo of Hamlet's own thoughts.

²⁷ Mad people, if asked to repeat a thing that they have just said, are apt to go on and say something else without knowing it; thus *gambolling* from the matter which they undertake to re-word. But the test is far from being a sure one; madmen being sometimes as firm and steady in the intellectual faculties as the sanest are.

It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
 Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
 Infects unseen. Confess yourself to Heaven ;
 Repent what's past ; avoid what is to come ;
 And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
 To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue ;
 For in the fatness of these pursy times
 Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
 Yea, *courb*²⁸ and woo for leave to do him good.

Queen. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

Ham. O, throw away the worser part of it,
 And live the purer with the other half.
 Good night : but go not to my uncle's bed ;
 Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
 That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
 Of habits evil, is angel yet in this,²⁹
 That to the use of actions fair and good
 He likewise gives a frock or livery,
 That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,
 And that shall lend a kind of easiness
 To the next abstinence ; the next more easy ;
 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
 And either shame the Devil or throw him out³⁰
 With wondrous potency. Once more, good night ;
 And when you are desirous to be blest,
 I'll blessing beg of you.³¹ For this same lord,

[*Pointing to POLONIUS.*

²⁸ To *courb* is to *bend, curve, or truckle* ; from the French *courber*.

²⁹ The meaning appears to be, that, though custom is a monster that *eats* out all *sensibility* or *consciousness* of evil habits ; yet, on the other hand, it is an angel in this respect, that it works in a manner equally favourable to good actions.—In this passage *custom, habit, and use* all have about the same meaning ; I mean the second *use*,—“ For use almost,” &c.

³⁰ The sense of *out* extends back over *shame* ; the meaning being, “ And either shame the Devil *out* or *force* him *out*.” See Critical Notes.

³¹ How beautiful this is ! Of course Hamlet means that, when he finds his mother on her knees to God, he will be on his knees to her.

I do repent: but Heaven hath pleased it so,
To punish me with this and this with me,
That I must be their³² scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.—
[*Aside.*] I must be cruel, only to be kind:
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.—
One word more, good lady.

Queen. What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
Let the bloat³³ King tempt you again to bed;
Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;³⁴
And let him, for a pair of reechy³⁵ kisses,
Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know;
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,³⁶
Such dear concernings hide? who would do so!
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,
To try conclusions,³⁷ in the basket creep,

³² The pronoun *their* refers to *Heaven*, which is here used as a collective noun, and put for *heavenly powers*.

³³ *Bloat* for *bloated*. Many preterites were formed so.

³⁴ *Mouse* was a term of endearment. So in *Anatomy of Melancholy*: "Pleasant names may be invented, bird, *mouse*, lamb, puss, pigeon."

³⁵ *Reeky* and *reechy* are the same word, and applied to any vaporous exhalation.

³⁶ A *paddock* is a *toad*; a *gib*, a *cat*. See vol. xi. page 16, note 17.

³⁷ To *try conclusions* is the old phrase for *trying experiments*, or putting a thing to the proof.—The passage alludes, apparently, to some fable or story now quite forgotten. Sir John Suckling, in one of his letters, refers to "the story of the jackanapes and the partridges."

And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

Ham. I must to England ; you know that ?

Queen. Alack,
I had forgot : 'tis so concluded on.

Ham. There's letters seal'd ; and my two schoolfellows,—
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,—

They bear the mandate ; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work ;

For 'tis the sport to have the engineer

Hoist with his own petar : ³⁸ and't shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the Moon. O, 'tis most sweet
When in one line two crafts directly meet !

This man shall set me packing : ³⁹

I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.

Mother, good night. Indeed, this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish-prating knave.—
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.—

Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally* ; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS.

³⁸ *Hoist* for *hoisted*, as in note 33.—*Petar*, now spelt *petard*, is a kind of mortar used for blowing open gates and doors.—“It shall go hard,” &c., means, “It must be a hard undertaking indeed, if I do not effect it.”

³⁹ A phrase from the packing-up of baggage for a march or voyage; hence having the general sense of getting ready, or of being off.

SCENE V.—*Another Room in the Castle.*

*Enter the King, the Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDEN-
STERN.*

King. There's matter in these sighs : these profound
heaves

You must translate ; 'tis fit we understand them.
Where is your son ?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.—

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night !

King. What, Gertrude ? How does Hamlet ?

Queen. Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend
Which is the mightier : in his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
He whips his rapier out, and cries *A rat, a rat !*
And in this brainish¹ apprehension kills
The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy deed !
It had been so with us, had we been there :
His liberty is full of threats to all ;
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd ?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt,²
This mad young man : but so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit ;
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life.³ Where is he gone ?

¹ Brainish for brainsick ; that is, crazy.

² Out of haunt means out of company ; in seclusion.

³ Certain diseases appear to be attended with an instinct of concealment.

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd ;
 O'er whom his very madness, like fine ore
 Among a mineral of metals base,⁴
 Shows itself pure : he weeps for what is done.

King. O Gertrude, come away !
 The Sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
 But we will ship him hence ; and this vile deed
 We must, with all our majesty and skill,
 Both countenance and excuse.— Ho, Guildenstern !

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid :
 Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
 And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him :
 Go seek him out ; speak fair, and bring the body
 Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.—

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*
 Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends ;
 And let them know both what we mean to do,
 And what's untimely done : so, haply slander—
 Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
 As level as the cannon to his blank,⁵
 Transports his poison'd shot — may miss our name,
 And hit the woundless air. O, come away !
 My soul is full of discord and dismay.]

[*Exeunt.*

I have heard of persons dying of external cancer ; yet they had kept so secret about it that their nearest friends had not suspected it.

⁴ *Mineral* for *mine* ; in accordance with old usage. So Hooker, in *Ecclesiastical Polity*, i. 4, 3, speaks of the fallen Angels as " being dispersed, some on the earth, some in the water, some amongst the *minerals*, dens, and caves, that are under the earth."

⁵ As *direct*, or as *sure-aimed*, as the cannon to its *mark*. *Direct* is one of the old meanings of *level*. The *blank* was the *white* spot at which aim was taken in target-shooting.

SCENE VI.—*Another Room in the Castle.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Safely stowed.

Rosen. } [Within.] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

Guild. }

Ham. What noise? who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Rosen. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Rosen. Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Rosen. Believe what?

Ham. That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge,¹ what replication should be made by the son of a king?

Rosen. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; that soaks up the King's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the King best service in the end: ke keeps them, as an ape doth nuts in the corner of his jaw; first mouth'd, to be last swallowed:² when he needs what you have glean'd, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall³ be dry again.

Rosen. I understand you not, my lord.

¹ That is, *on being demanded by* a sponge. An instance of the infinitive used *gerundively*, or like the Latin *Gerund*. See page 91, note 2.—*Replication* is the same as *reply*.

² Apes have a pouch on each side of the jaw, in which they stow away the food first taken, and there keep it till they have eaten the rest.

³ *Shall* for *will*; the two being often used indiscriminately.

Ham. I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.⁴

Rosen. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the King.

Ham. The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body.⁵ The King is a thing —

Guild. A thing, my lord!

Ham. — of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.⁶

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.—*Another Room in the Castle.*

Enter the King, attended.

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body. How dangerous is it that this man goes loose! Yet must not we put the strong law on him: He's loved of the distracted¹ multitude, Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes; And, where 'tis so, th' offender's scourge is weigh'd, But never the offence.² To bear all smooth and even, This sudden sending him away must seem

⁴ Perhaps this is best explained by a passage in *Love's Labours Lost*, v. 2: "A jest's prosperity lies in the ear of him that hears it, never in the tongue of him that makes it."

⁵ Hamlet is talking riddles, in order to tease and puzzle his questioners. The meaning of this riddle, to the best of my guessing, is, that the King's body is with the King, but not the King's soul: he's a king without kingliness. Perhaps, however, the passage should be regarded simply as a piece of intentional downright nonsense.

⁶ "Hide fox, and all after," was a juvenile sport, most probably what is now called *hide and seek*.

¹ *Distracted* in the sense of *discordant*, or *disagreeing*; sometimes called *many-headed*. Perhaps the sense of *fickle*, *inconstant*, is also intended.

² Who like not what their judgment approves, for they have none, but what pleases their eyes; and in this case the criminal's punishment is considered, but not his crime.

Deliberate pause :³ diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved,
Or not at all. —

Enter ROSENCRANTZ.

How now ! what hath befall'n ?

Rosen. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he ?

Rosen. Without, my lord ; guarded, to know your pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Rosen. Ho, Guildenstern ! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius ?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper ! where ?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten : a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him.⁴ Your worm is your only emperor for diet : we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, — two dishes, but to one table : that's the end.

King. Alas, alas !

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

³ "To keep all things quiet and in order, this sudden act must seem a thing that we *have paused and deliberated upon.*" See page 194, note 11.

⁴ Alluding, probably, to the Diet of Worms, which Protestants regarded as a convocation of *politicians*. Here, again, I am indebted to Mr. Joseph Crosby, who aptly prompts me, that there is a further allusion to the character of Polonius ; meaning such worms as might naturally be bred in the carcass of a defunct old political wire-puller. And he remarks, "Had the old gentleman been conspicuous for his ambition, it would have been just like Shakespeare to call the worms bred from him *aspiring worms.*"

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.⁵

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In Heaven ; send thither to see : if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. [To some Attendants.] Go seek him there.

Ham. He will stay till ye come. [Exeunt Attendants.

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety, — Which we do tender,⁶ as we dearly grieve For that which thou hast done, — must send thee hence With fiery quickness : therefore prepare thyself ; The bark is ready, and the wind at help, Th' associates tend,⁷ and every thing is bent For England.

Ham. For England !

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Ham. I see a cherub that sees them.⁸ — But, come ; for England ! — Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother : father and mother is man and wife ; man and wife is one flesh ; and so, my mother. — Come, for England ! [Exit.

King. Follow him at foot ; tempt him with speed aboard ; Delay it not ; I'll have him hence to-night :

⁵ Alluding to the *royal* journeys of state, called *progresses*.

⁶ To *tender* a thing is to be *careful* of it. See page 169, note 25.

⁷ The associates of your voyage are *waiting*. — "The wind *at help*" means the wind *serves*, or is right, to forward you.

⁸ Hamlet means that he divines them, or has an inkling of them.

Away ! for every thing is seal'd and done
That else leans on th' affair ; pray you, make haste. —

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught, —
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us, — thou mayst not coldly set⁹
Our sovereign process ; which imports at full,
By letters conjuring¹⁰ to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England ;
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me : till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.¹¹

[*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Plain in Denmark.*

Enter FORTINBRAS, a Captain, and Soldiers, marching.

Fortin. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish King ;
Tell him that by his license Fortinbras
Claims the conveyance of a promised march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.¹

⁹ To *set* formerly meant to *estimate*. To *set* much or little by a thing, is to *estimate* it much or little.

¹⁰ In Shakespeare's time the two senses of *conjure* had not acquired each its peculiar way of pronouncing the word. Here *conjuring* has the first syllable long, with the sense of *earnestly entreating*.

¹¹ Of course strict grammar would here require " *will ne'er begin* " ; the tense being changed for the rhyme. See page 190, note 25.

¹ The rendezvous here meant is the place where Fortinbras is to wait for the Captain after the latter has done his message to the King.

If that his Majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye ;²
And let him know so.

Capt. I will do't, my lord.

Fortin. Go softly on.

[*Exeunt* FORTINBRAS and Soldiers.

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others.

Ham. Good sir, whose powers are these ?

Capt. They are of Norway, sir.

Ham. How purposed, sir, I pray you ?

Capt. Against some part of Poland.

Ham. Who commands them, sir ?

Capt. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier ?

Capt. Truly to speak, sir, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it ;³
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

Ham. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

² In the *Regulations for the Establishment of the Queen's Household*, 1627 : "All such as doe service in the queen's eye." And in *The Establishment of Prince Henry's Household*, 1610 : "All such as doe service in the prince's eye." Fortinbras means, "I will wait upon his presence, and pay my respects to him in person."

³ The meaning is, "I would not pay five ducats for the exclusive privilege of collecting all the revenue it will yield to the State." To *farm* or *farm out* taxes is to sell commissions for collecting them, the buyers to have the privilege of making what they can by the process. Burke uses the word in a like sense in his *Articles of Charge against Hastings* : "The *farming* of the defence of a country, being wholly unprecedented and evidently abused, could have no real object but to enrich the contractors at the Company's expense." — *To pay* has the force of *by paying*. See vol. x. page 160, note 10.

Capt. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

Ham. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw:
This is th' imposthume⁴ of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, sir.

Capt. God b' wi' you, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Rosen. Will't please you go, my lord?

Ham. I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.—

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET.*]

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge ! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unused.⁵ Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th' event,—
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,
And ever three parts coward,—I do not know
Why yet I live to say *This thing's to do* ;
Sith⁶ I have cause and will and strength and means
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me :
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince ;
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,⁷
Makes mouths at the invisible event ;

⁴ *Imposthume* was in common use for *abscess* in Shakespeare's time. It is a corruption of *apostem*.

⁵ To *fust* is to *become mouldy*; an old word now obsolete.

⁶ *Sith* is merely an old form of *since*; now quite out of use.

⁷ *Puff'd*, here, is *inspired* or *animated*.—To *make mouths* at a thing is to *scorn it*, or *hold it in contempt*.

Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I, then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,⁸
And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds; fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent⁹

⁸ Provocations which excite both my reason and my passions.

⁹ *Continent* means that which contains or encloses. "If there be no fulnesse, then is the *continent* greater than the content."—Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*.—The way Hamlet talks in this and several other places moves me to say somewhat touching his state of mind. He is a man of deep and strong feelings; his sensibilities are quick and keen. But he is also quick and strong in understanding, or in the "large discourse looking before and after." Now his feelings are goading him on to the instant stroke of revenge; nothing else can satisfy them: they are bidding him throw consequences to the winds, and would have him act just as Laertes talks: "To Hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!" &c. Meanwhile his judgment keeps holding him back, as it certainly should. Hence there springs up a fierce, agonized conflict between these two parts of his inner man; and his feelings become terribly insurgent and clamorous: sometimes they seem to get the upper hand of him; he takes part with them, and goes to pleading their cause most vehemently against his higher self; seeking to ease, or to appease, his heart-agony in overwrought strains of self-reproach, and with hopes of speedy satisfaction. All this is profoundly natural. In action, however, Hamlet stands firm and true to his higher self: here his judgment keeps the upper hand; and though he cannot silence his insurgent feelings, yet, in his strength of will, he can and does overrule them. While the heart is boiling hot within him, and almost ready to burst its case, still his head, though full of power, and though all alive within, remains generally, cool; his passions never, but once, swamping him into an oblivion of the strong *objective* considerations that forbid the stroke.

To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth !

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*Elsinore. A Room in the Castle.*

Enter the Queen and HORATIO.

Queen. I will not speak with her.

Hora. She is importunate, indeed distract ;¹
Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have ?

Hora. She speaks much of her father ; says she hears
There's tricks i' the world ; and hems, and beats her heart ;
Spurns enviously at straws ;² speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense : her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshapèd use of it doth move
The hearers to collection ;³ they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts ;
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.⁴
'Twere good she were spoken with ; for she may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

Queen. Let her come in.—

[*Exit HORATIO.*]

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss :⁵
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,

¹ *Distract* for *distracted* ; just as *bloat* and *hoist* before.

² *Kicks spitefully* at straws. Such was the common use of *spurn* in the Poet's time. So in *The Merchant*, i. 3 : " And foot me as you *spurn* a stranger cur over your threshold." And in *Julius Cæsar*, iii. 1 : " I *spurn* thee like a cur out of my way." — *Envy* was commonly used for *malice*.

³ *Collection* is *inference* or *conjecture*. — *Aim* is *guess*.

⁴ *Unhappily* is here used in the sense of *mischievously*.

⁵ Shakespeare is not singular in the use of *amiss* as a substantive. " Each toy " is each *trifle*.

It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA.⁶

Ophe. Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark ?
Queen. How now, Ophelia !

Ophe. [Sings.] *How should I your true-love know
 From another one ?
 By his cockle hat and staff,
 And his sandal shoon.⁷*

Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song ?
Ophe. Say you ? nay, pray you, mark.

[Sings.] *He is dead and gone, lady,
 He is dead and gone ;
 At his head a grass-green turf,
 At his heels a stone.*

Queen. Nay, but, Ophelia, —
Ophe. Pray you, mark.

[Sings.] *White his shroud as the mountain snow, —
 Enter the King.*

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.

Ophe. [Sings.] — *Larded⁸ with sweet flowers ;
 Which bewept to the grave did go,
 With true-love showers.*

⁶ There is no part of the play more pathetic than this scene; which, I suppose, proceeds from the utter insensibility Ophelia has to her own misfortunes. A great sensibility, or none at all, seems to produce the same effects. In the latter case the audience supply what is wanting, and with the former they sympathize. — SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

⁷ These were the badges of pilgrims. The *cockle shell* was an emblem of their intention to go beyond sea. The habit, being held sacred, was often assumed as a disguise in love-adventures.

⁸ *Larded* is *garnished*, or *ornamented*.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Ophe. Well, God 'ild you!⁹ They say the owl was a baker's daughter.¹⁰ Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King Conceit upon her father.

Ophe. Pray you, let's have no words of this; but, when they ask you what it means, say you this:

[Sings.] *To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.¹¹
Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,
And dupp'd¹² the chamber-door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.*

King. Pretty Ophelia!

Ophe. Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on't:

[Sings.] *By Gis and by Saint Charity,¹³
Alack, and fie for shame!*

⁹ God yield or reward you. See vol. v. page 108, note 9.

¹⁰ There was a tradition that the Saviour went into a baker's shop and asked for some bread. The baker put some dough in the oven to bake for Him, and was rebuked by his daughter for doing so. For this wickedness the daughter was transformed into an owl.

¹¹ Of course *Valentine* stands for a person here; and it means much the same as *lover* or *sweet-heart*. The old use of the name is well shown in Scott's *Fair Maid of Perth*, where Simon Glover wishes to make a match between his daughter Catharine and Henry Smith, the hero of the tale. He therefore so arranges matters, that Smith shall be the first person whom Catharine sees on the morning of St. Valentine's day. This makes him her Valentine for the year: as such, he may claim a kiss of her on the spot, and also as often as they meet during the year.

¹² To *dup* is to *do up*, as to *don* is to *do on*.

¹³ This use of *Gis* has not been accounted for. Probably it is a corruption, or perhaps a disguise, of the Saviour's name. *Saint Charity* was often used in this way.

*Young men will do't, if they come to't ;
 By cock,¹⁴ they are to blame.
 Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
 You promised me to wed.
 So would I ha' done, by yonder Sun,
 An thou hadst not come to my bed.*

King. How long hath she been thus?

Ophe. I hope all will be well. We must be patient ; but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it ; and so I thank you for your good counsel.—Come, my coach !—Good night, ladies ; good night, sweet ladies ; good night, good night.

[*Exit.*]

King. Follow her close ; give her good watch, I pray you.— [*Exit HORATIO.*]

O, this is the poison of deep grief ; it springs All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude, When sorrows come, they come not single spies, But in battalias !¹⁵ First, her father slain : Next, your son gone ; and he most violent author Of his own just remove : the people muddled, Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers, For good Polonius' death ; and we have done but greenly, In hugger-mugger¹⁶ to inter him : poor Ophelia

¹⁴ The origin and meaning of this oath, also, are wrapped in obscurity. It occurs in several old plays, and Shakespeare has it in at least two other places. Probably it was a corruption, or a disguise, of the sacred name. See vol. vi. page 18, note 35, and vol. xi. page 257, note 1.

¹⁵ Men go out *singly*, or one by one, to act as spies ; when they go forth to *fight*, they go in armies.

¹⁶ This phrase was much used, before and in the Poet's time, for any thing done hurriedly and by stealth. Thus Florio explains *clandestinaire*, "to hide or conceal by stealth, or *in hugger-mugger*." And in North's Plutarch Antony urges that Cæsar's "body should be honourably buried, and not in *hugger-mugger*."

Divided from herself and her fair judgment,
Without the which we're pictures, or mere beasts :
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France ;
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death ;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear.¹⁷ O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering-piece,¹⁸ in many places
Gives me superfluous death.

[*A noise within.*

Queen. Alack, what noise is this?

King. Where are my Switzers?¹⁹ Let them guard the door.—

Enter a Gentleman.

What is the matter?

Gent. Save yourself, my lord :
The ocean, overpeering of his list,²⁰
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord ;
And—as²¹ the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,

¹⁷ "In ear and ear" is used, apparently, to give a plural sense.

¹⁸ A murdering-piece, or *murderer*, was a small piece of artillery. Case-shot, filled with small bullets, nails, old iron, &c., was often used in these *murderers*. This accounts for the raking fire attributed to them in the text.

¹⁹ *Switzers* for royal guards. The Swiss were then, as since, mercenary soldiers of any nation that could afford to pay them.

²⁰ *Overflowing his bounds*, or *limits*. See vol. v. page 191, note 14.

²¹ As has here the force of *as if*. The explanation sometimes given of the passage is, that the rabble are the ratifiers and props of every *idle* word. The plain sense is, that antiquity and custom are the ratifiers and props of every *sound* word touching the matter in hand, the ordering of human society, and the State.

The ratifiers and props of every word —
 They cry, *Choose we ; Laertes shall be king !*
 Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
Laertes shall be king, Laertes king !

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry ! —
 O, this is counter,²² you false Danish dogs !

King. The doors are broke.

[*Noise within.*

Enter LAERTES, armed ; Danes following.

Laer. Where is this King ? — Sirs, stand you all without.

Danes. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you, give me leave.

Danes. We will, we will. [They retire without the door.

Laer. I thank you : keep the door. — O thou vile King,
 Give me my father !

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bas-
 tard ;

Cries cuckold to my father ; brands the harlot
 Even here, between the chaste unsmirched²³ brows
 Of my true mother.

King. What's the cause, Laertes,
 That thy rebellion looks so giant-like ? —
 Let him go, Gertrude ; do not fear our person :
 There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
 That treason can but peep to what it would,
 Acts little of his will. — Tell me, Laertes,
 Why thou art thus incensed : — let him go, Gertrude : —
 Speak, man.

Laer. Where is my father ?

King. Dead.

²² Hounds are said to run *counter* when they are upon a false scent, or
 hunt by the heel, running backward and mistaking the course of the game.

²³ *Unsmirched* is *unsullied, spotless.*

Queen.

But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.*Laer.* How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with: To Hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil! Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit! I dare damnation: to this point I stand, That both the worlds I give to negligence, Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged Most thoroughly²⁴ for my father.*King.* Who shall stay you?*Laer.* My will, not all the world: And, for my means, I'll husband them so well, They shall go far with little.*King.* Good Laertes, If you desire to know the certainty Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge, That, swoopstake,²⁵ you will draw both friend and foe, Winner and loser?*Laer.* None but his enemies.*King.* Will you know them, then?*Laer.* To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms, And, like the kind life-rendering pelican, Repast them with my blood.²⁶*King.* Why, now you speak Like a good child and a true gentleman. That I am guiltless of your father's death,

²⁴ *Throughly* and *thoroughly*, as also *through* and *thorough*, were used indifferently in the Poet's time. See vol. xii. page 268, note 13.

²⁵ *Swoopstake* here means *indiscriminately*. A sweepstake is one who wins or *sweeps in all the stakes*, whether on the race-grounds or at the gaming-table.

²⁶ The pelican is a fabulous bird, often referred to by the old poets for illustration. An old book entitled *A Choice of Emblems and other Devices*, by Geffrey Whitney, 1586, contains a picture of an eagle on her nest, tearing open her breast to feed her young.

And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment pierce²⁷
As day does to your eye.

Danes. [Within.] Let her come in.

Laer. How now! what noise is that?—

Re-enter OPHELIA.

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven-times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!—
By Heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!—
O Heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love; and where 'tis fine
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.²⁸

Ophe. [Sings.]

They bore him barefaced on the bier;
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;
And on his grave rain'd many a tear.—

Fare you well, my dove!

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move me thus.

Ophe. You must sing, *Down a-down, an you call him a-down-a.* O, how the wheel²⁹ becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.³⁰

²⁷ *Level*, again, for *direct*.—*Pierce*, here, has the sense of *penetrate*, that is, *go through* or *reach*.

²⁸ Here, as often, *instance* is *proof, example, specimen, assurance*. The precious thing which Ophelia's fineness of nature has sent after her father is "her fair judgment," that is, her sanity.

²⁹ The *wheel* is the *burden* of a ballad; from the Latin *rota*, a *round*, which is usually accompanied with a burden frequently repeated.

³⁰ Probably some old ballad, of which no traces have come to light.

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Ophe, "There's fennel for you, and columbines:—there's rue for you; and here's some for me: we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays. O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy. I would give you some violets, but they wither'd all when my father died: they say he made a good end."

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. Act 4, Sc. 2.

Page 275.

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.³¹

Ophe. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance ; pray you, love, remember : and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.³²

Laer. A document³³ in madness ; thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Ophe. There's fennel for you, and columbines :³⁴—there's rue for you ; and here's some for me : we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays. O, you must wear your rue with a difference.³⁵—There's a daisy.—I would give you some violets,³⁶ but they wither'd all when my father died : they say he made a good end, —

³¹ He means that Ophelia's nonsense tells more, as to her condition, than speaking sense would.

³² The language of flowers is very ancient, and the old poets have many instances of it. In *The Winter's Tale*, iv. 3, Perdita makes herself delectable in the use of it, distributing her flowers much as Ophelia does here. Rosemary, being supposed to strengthen the memory, was held emblematic of remembrance, and in that thought was distributed at weddings and funerals.—Pansies, from the French *pensees*, were emblems of pensiveness, *thought* being here again used for *grief*, the same as in page 220, note 13. The next speech, "thoughts and remembrance fitted," is another instance.

³³ Document, from the Latin *doceo*, was often used in the original sense of *lesson*, or *something taught*. So in *The Faerie Queene*, i. 10, 19, where Fidelia takes the Redcross Knight under her tuition, and draws upon "her sacred booke,"

And heavenly *documents* thereout did preach,
That weaker witt of man could never reach.

³⁴ Fennel and columbine were significant of cajolery and ingratitude; so that Ophelia might fitly give them to the guileful and faithless King.

³⁵ Rue was emblematic of sorrow or *ruth*, and was called *herb-grace* from the moral and medicinal virtues ascribed to it.—There may be some uncertainty as to Ophelia's meaning, when she says to the Queen, "you must wear your rue with a *difference*." *Bearing a difference* is an old heraldic phrase; and the difference here intended is probably best explained in Cogan's *Haven of Health* : "The second property is that *rue abateth carnal lust*, which is also confirmed by Galen." So that the difference in the Queen's case would be emblematic of her "hasty return to the nuptial state, and a severe reflection on her indecent marriage."

³⁶ The daisy was an emblem of dissembling; the violet, of faithfulness, and is so set down in *The Lover's Nosegay*.

[Sings.] *For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.*³⁷

Laer. Thought and affliction, passion,³⁸ Hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

Ophe. [Sings.]

And will he not come again ?

And will he not come again ?

No, no, he is dead,

Gone to his death-bed;

He never will come again.

His beard was white as snow,

*All flaxen was his poll :*³⁹

He is gone, he is gone,

And we cast away moan :

God ha' mercy on his soul !

And of⁴⁰ all Christian souls, I pray God. — God b' wi' ye.

[Exit.

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must cōmmeune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart ;
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me :
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction ; but, if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labour with your soul

³⁷ Poor Ophelia in her madness remembers fragments of many old popular ballads. *Bonny Robin* appears to have been a favourite, for there were many others written to that tune.

³⁸ *Thought*, again, for *grief*. — *Passion* for *suffering* ; the classical sense.

³⁹ *Poll* was in common use for *head*. Relics of the old usage survive still in our *polls* and *poll-tax*, where men are counted and taxed by the head.

⁴⁰ *Of*, again, for *on*. See page 202, note 37.

To give it due content.

Laer. Let this be so :
His means of death, his obscure burial,—
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation,⁴¹—
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from Heaven to Earth,
That I must call't in question.

King. So you shall ;
And where th' offence is let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.—*The Same. Another Room in the Castle.*

Enter HORATIO and a Servant.

Hor. What are they that would speak with me ?

Serv. Sailors, sir : they say they have letters for you.

Hor. Let them come in.— [Exit Servant.
I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

1 Sail. God bless you, sir.

Hor. Let Him bless thee too.

1 Sail. He shall, sir, an't please Him. There's a letter
for you, sir,—it comes from the ambassador that was bound
for England,—if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know
it is.

Hor. [Reads.] *Horatio, when thou shalt have overlook'd
this, give these fellows some means to the King : they have
letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate*

⁴¹ The funerals of knights and persons of rank were made with great ceremony and ostentation formerly. Sir John Hawkins observes that "the sword, the helmet, the gauntlet, spurs, and tabard are still hung over the grave of every knight."

of very warlike appointment¹ gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour; and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy: but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the King have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou wouldest fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore² of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell. *He that thou knowest thine,* HAMLET.

Come, I will make you way for these your letters;
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Another Room in the Castle.*

Enter the King, and LAERTES.

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain
Pursued my life.

Laer. It well appears. But tell me,
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,

¹ *Appointment*, here, is *armament*, or *equipment*. Still used thus in military language. Also in "a well-appointed house"; meaning, of course, *well-furnished*, or *well-ordered*.

² The *bore* is the *caliber* or *capacity* of a gun; as a ten-pounder, or a seventy-four pounder, according to the weight of the ball.

You mainly¹ were stirr'd up.

King. O, for two special reasons ;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd,
But yet to me they're strong. The Queen his mother —
Lives almost by his looks ; and for myself, —
My virtue or my plague, be't either-which, —
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general gender² bear him ;
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces ;³ so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,⁴
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.⁵

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost ;
A sister driven into desperate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,⁶
Stood challenger on mount of all the age⁷
For her perfections. But my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that : you must not think

¹ The Poet sometimes uses *mainly* for *greatly* or *strongly*. So in *Troilus and Cressida*, iv. 4: "I do not call your faith in question so *mainly* as my merit. See vol. xi. page 57, note 25.

² "The general *gender*" is the common *race* or *sort* of people ; the multitude. Shakespeare has the like phrase, "one *gender* of herbs."

³ Punishment would invest him with more grace in the people's eye ; his *fetters* would make him appear the lovelier to them.

⁴ So in Roger Ascham's *Toxophilus* : "Weake bowes and lyghte shaftes cannot stande in a *rough wynde*."

⁵ Elliptical. "And *would not have gone* where I had aim'd them."

⁶ "If I may praise her for what she was, but has now ceased to be." Or perhaps, "If I may go back to her as a theme of praise."

⁷ That is, "stood challenger of all the age."

That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,
 That we can let our beard be shook with danger,
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more :
 I loved your father, and we love ourself ;
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine —

Enter a Messenger.

How now ! what news ?

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet :
 This to your Majesty ; this to the Queen.

King. From Hamlet ! who brought them ?

Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say ; I saw them not :
 They were given me by Claudio ; he received them
 Of him that brought them.

King. Laertes, you shall hear them.—
 Leave us. [Exit Messenger.]

[Reads.] *High and mighty : You shall know I am set
 naked⁸ on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to
 see your kingly eyes ; when I shall, first asking your pardon
 thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more
 strange return.* HAMLET.

What should this mean ? Are all the rest come back ?
 Or is it some abuse,⁹ and no such thing ?

Laer. Know you the hand ?

King. 'Tis Hamlet's character. *Naked* ;
 And in a postscript here he says, *alone*.
 Can you advise me ?

Laer. I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come :
 It warms the very sickness in my heart,
 That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
Thus diddest thou.

⁸ *Naked*, here, means destitute of attendants ; *alone*.

⁹ *Abuse* for *cheat, deception, or delusion*. Often so.

King. If it be so, Laertes,—
As how should it be so, how otherwise?¹⁰—
Will you be ruled by me?

Laer. I will, my lord,
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,
As checking¹¹ at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall :
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe ;
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,¹²
And call it accident.

Laer. My lord, I will be ruled ;
The rather, if you could devise it so,
That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein they say you shine : your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him,
As did that one ; and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.¹³

Laer. What part is that, my lord ?

¹⁰ That is, "how should it be either true or not true?" The thing seems incredible either way; incredible that Hamlet should have returned; incredible that the letter should not be in Hamlet's *character*, or *hand-writing*.

¹¹ To *check at* is a term in falconry, meaning to start away or fly off from the lure. So in Hinde's *Eliosto Libidinoso*, 1606: "For who knows not, quoth she, that this hawk, which comes now so fair to the fist, may to-morrow *check at* the lure?"

¹² *Acquit* the proceeding or the *contrivance* of all *design*.

¹³ The Poet again uses *siege* for *seat*, that is, *place* or *rank*, in *Othello*, i. 2: "I fetch my life and being from men of royal *siege*." The usage was not uncommon.

King. A very¹⁴ riband in the cap of youth,
 Yet needful too ; for youth no less becomes
 The light and careless livery that it wears
 Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
 Importing health and graveness.¹⁵ Two months since,
 Here was a gentleman of Normandy :
 I've seen, myself, and served against, the French,
 And they can¹⁶ well on horseback : but this gallant
 Had witchcraft in't ; he grew unto his seat ;
 And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,
 As he had been incorpored and demi-natured
 With the brave beast : so far he topp'd my thought,
 That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,¹⁷
 Come short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman was't?

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamond.

King. The very same.

Laer. I know him well : he is the brooch,¹⁸ indeed,
 And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you ;
 And gave you such a masterly report
 For art and exercise in your defence,¹⁹
 And for your rapier most especially,

¹⁴ The Poet repeatedly has *very* in the sense of *mere*.

¹⁵ The sense of *health* goes with the preceding clause ; the "light and careless livery" denoting health, as the black dress denotes gravity.—*Weeds* was used for *clothes* or *dress* in general. Here the sense of *settled* continues over *weeds* : *staid* or *sober* dress.

¹⁶ *Can* is here used in its original sense of *ability* or *skill*.

¹⁷ That is, in *the imagination* of shapes and tricks, or *feats*. This use of *forge* and *forgery* was not unfrequent.—*To top* is to *surpass*.

¹⁸ Brooch for any conspicuous ornament. So in *The World runnes on Wheeles*, 1630: "These sonnes of Mars, who in their times were the glorious *Brooches* of our nation, and admirable terroure to our enemies."

¹⁹ *Defence* here means *fencing* or *sword-practice*.

That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
If one could match you : the scrimers²⁰ of their nation,
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with your envy,²¹
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.
Now, out of this,—

Laer. What out of this, my lord?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

Laer. Why ask you this?

King. Not that I think you did not love your father ;
But that I know love is begun by time,²²
And that I see, in passages of proof,²³
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it ;
And nothing is at a like goodness still ;
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,²⁴
Dies in his own too-much. That we would do,
We should do when we would ; for this *would* changes,
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents ;

²⁰ *Scrimer* is from the French *escrimeur*, which means *fencer*.

²¹ "With envy of you." The objective genitive, as it is called. Shakespeare often has both the objective and the subjective genitive in cases where present usage does not admit them.

²² As love is begun by *time*, and has its gradual increase, so *time* qualifies and abates it.

²³ *Passages of proof* means *instances of trial*, or *experience*.

²⁴ *Plurisy* is from the Latin *plus, pluris*, and must not be confounded with *pleurisy*. It means *excess*, much the same as Burns's "*unco guid*." So in Massinger's *Unnatural Combat* : "*Plurisy* of goodness is thy ill."

And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,
 That hurts by easing.²⁵ But, to th' quick o' the ulcer :
 Hamlet comes back : what would you undertake,
 'To show yourself your father's son in deed
 More than in words ?

Laer. To cut his throat i' the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize ;²⁶
 Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
 Will you do this,²⁷ keep close within your chamber.
 Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home :
 We'll put on²⁸ those shall praise your excellence,
 And set a double varnish on the fame
 The Frenchman gave you ; bring you, in fine, together,
 And wager on your heads. He, being remiss,
 Most generous, and free from all contriving,
 Will not peruse²⁹ the foils ; so that, with ease
 Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
 A sword unbated,³⁰ and, in a pass of practice,
 Requite him for your father.

Laer. I will do't ;

²⁵ It was anciently believed that sighing consumed the blood. The Poet has several allusions to this. There is also a fine moral meaning in the figure. Jeremy Taylor speaks of certain people who take to a sentimental penitence, as "cozening themselves with their own tears," as if these would absolve them from "doing works meet for repentance." Such tears may be fitly said to "hurt by easing."

²⁶ Murder should not have the protection or privilege of sanctuary in any place. The allusion is to the rights of sanctuary with which certain religious places were formerly invested, so that criminals resorting to them were shielded not only from private revenge, but from the arm of the law.

²⁷ That is, "If you will do this"; or, "If you *would* do this."

²⁸ *Put on*, here, is *stir up*, *incite*, or, as we say, *set on*.

²⁹ *Peruse*, for *observe closely* or *scrutinize*.

³⁰ *Unbated* is *unblunted*: a foil without the cap, or button, which was put upon the point, when fencers were to play or practise their art. — *A pass of practice* is a *thrust* made as in exercise of skill; the thruster pretending to be ignorant of the button's being off the foil.

And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,³¹
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm³² so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the Moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratch'd withal : I'll touch my point
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

King. Let's further think of this ;
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape. If this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,³³
'Twere better not assay'd : therefore this project
Should have a back or second, that might hold,
If this should blast in proof.³⁴ Soft ! — let me see :
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings, —
I ha't :
When in your motion you are hot and dry, —
As make your bouts more violent to that end, —
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him
A chalice for the nonce ;³⁵ whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,³⁶

³¹ *Mountebank* commonly meant a *quack*, but is here put, apparently, for *druggist* or *apothecary*. The word seems to have been used originally of a pedlar or pretender who mounted a bench, or a bank by the wayside, and hawked off his wares or his skill. — Here, as generally in Shakespeare, *mortal* is *deadly* ; that which *kills*.

³² *Cataplasm* is a *soft plaster*, or a *poultice*. — *Simples* is, properly, *herbs* ; but was used of any *medicine*. See vol. vi. page 27, note 9.

³³ " If our purpose should expose or betray itself through lack of skill in the execution."

³⁴ Should break down in the trial. The image is of proving guns, which of course sometimes burst in the testing.

³⁵ " For the *nonce*" is for the *occasion* ; literally, for the *once*.

³⁶ *Stuck*, a fencing-term, is *thrust* ; the same as the Italian and Spanish

Our purpose may hold there. —

Enter the Queen.

How now, sweet Queen !

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow. — Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd ! O, where ? ³⁷

Queen. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream :
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
That liberal ³⁸ shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them :
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke ;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up ;
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
As one incapable ³⁹ of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element : but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch ⁴⁰ from her melodious lay

stoccata and *staccado*. So in *Twelfth Night*, iii. 4: "He gives me the *stuck-in* with such mortal motion, that it is inevitable."

³⁷ That Laertes might be excused in some degree for not cooling, the Act concludes with the affecting death of Ophelia; who in the beginning lay like a little projection of land into a lake or stream, covered with spray-flowers, quietly reflected in the quiet waters; but at length is undermined or loosened, and becomes a fairy isle, and after a brief vagrancy sinks almost without an eddy. — COLERIDGE.

³⁸ *Liberal* is repeatedly used by Shakespeare for *loose-tongued*.

³⁹ *Incapable* for *insensible* or *unconscious*. The Poet has it so in one or two other places. See vol. ix, page 189, note 3, and vol. xii, page 274, note 6.

⁴⁰ *Wretch*, again, as a strong term of endearment. See page 197, note 23.



Queen. "There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream:
There with fantastic garlands did she come."

Hamlet. Act 4, Scene 1.

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To muddy death.

Laer. Alas, then she is drown'd !

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd !

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears : but yet
It is our trick ; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will : when these are gone,
The woman will be out.⁴¹ — Adieu, my lord :
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly drowns it.

[*Exit.*

King. Let's follow, Gertrude :
How much I had to do to calm his rage !
Now fear I this will give it start again ;
Therefore let's follow.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Elsinore. A Churchyard.*

Enter two Clowns, with spades, &c.

1 Clown. Is she to be buried in Christian burial that
wilfully seeks her own salvation ?

2 Clown. I tell thee she is ; and therefore make her grave
straight :¹ the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian
burial.

1 Clown. How can that be, unless she drowned herself
in her own defence ?

2 Clown. Why, 'tis found so.

⁴¹ “ I shall have wept the woman's tenderness all out of me, and shall be
again ready for a man's work.”

¹ *Straight* for *straightway* or *immediately* ; a common usage.

1 Clown. It must be *se offendendo*; ² it cannot be else. For here lies the point: If I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act; and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, to perform: argal ³ she drown'd herself wittingly.

2 Clown. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,—

1 Clown. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, ⁴ he goes,—mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

2 Clown. But is this law?

1 Clown. Ay, marry, is't; crowner's-quest law. ⁵

2 Clown. Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out of Christian burial.

1 Clown. Why, there thou say'st; and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even-Christian. ⁶—Come, my spade.—There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

² The Clown, in undertaking to show off his legal learning, blunders *offendendo* for *defendendo*.

³ *Argal* is an old vulgar corruption of the Latin *ergo, therefore*.

⁴ "Will he, *nill he*," is will he, or will he not.

⁵ Hawkins thinks the Poet here meant to ridicule a case reported by Plowden. Sir James Hales had drowned himself in a fit of insanity, and the legal question was whether his lease was thereby forfeited. Much subtlety was expended in finding out whether Sir James was the *agent* or the *patient*; that is, whether *he went to the water* or *the water came to him*. The following is part of the argument: "Sir James Hales was dead, and how came he to his death? It may be answered, by drowning; and who drowned him? Sir James Hales; and when did he drown him? In his lifetime. So that Sir James Hales being alive caused Sir James Hales to die, and the act of the living man was the death of the dead man."

⁶ *Even-Christian* for *fellow-Christian*; an old expression, to be found in Chaucer. Wycliffe has *even-servant* for *fellow-servant*.

2 Clown. Was he a gentleman?

1 Clown. He was the first that ever bore arms.

2 Clown. Why, he had none.

1 Clown. What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says, Adam digg'd: could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

2 Clown. Go to.

1 Clown. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2 Clown. The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1 Clown. I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal the gallows may do well to thee. To't again; come.

2 Clown. Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

1 Clown. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.⁷

2 Clown. Marry, now I can tell.

1 Clown. To't.

2 Clown. Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at some distance.

1 Clown. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when you are ask'd this question next, say *a grave-maker*: the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Vaughan; fetch me a stoup of liquor.

[*Exit 2 Clown.*]

⁷ This was a common phrase for giving over or ceasing to do a thing; a metaphor derived from the *unyoking* of oxen at the end of their labour.

[He digs and sings.]

*In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract—O—the time, for—ah—my behove—
O—Methought there was nothing meet.⁸*

Ham. Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

Hora. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Ham. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1 Clown. [Sings.]

*But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipp'd me intil the land,
As if I had never been such.* [Throws up a skull.]

Ham. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'erreaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?⁹

Hora. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier; which could say *Good morrow, sweet lord!* *How dost thou, good lord?* This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it, might it not?

⁸ The original ballad from whence these stanzas are taken is printed in Tottel's *Miscellany, or Songs and Sonnettes by Lord Surrey and others*, 1575. The ballad is attributed to Lord Vaux, and is printed by Dr. Percy in his *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*. The *O's* and *ahs* are meant to express the Clown's gruntings as he digs.

⁹ Shakespeare uses *politician* for a *plotter* or *schemer*; one who is ever trying to out-craft and overreach his neighbour, and even Providence, and to intrigue his way to popularity or profit. The equivoque in *o'erreaches* is obvious enough.

Hora. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so ; and now my Lady Worm's ;¹⁰ chopless, and knock'd about the mazzard with a sexton's spade : here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats¹¹ with 'em? mine ache to think on't.

i. Clown. [Sings.]

*A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,
For and¹² a shrouding sheet; — O —
A pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*

[Throws up another skull.

Ham. There's another : why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quilletts,¹³ his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce¹⁴ with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum ! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries :¹⁵ is this the fine of his fines, and

¹⁰ The skull that was *my Lord Such-a-one's* is now *my Lady Worm's*.

¹¹ *Loggats* are small logs or pieces of wood. Hence *loggats* was the name of an ancient rustic game, wherein a stake was fixed in the ground at which *loggats* were thrown ; in short, a ruder kind of quoit-play.

¹² " *For and*," says Dyce, " in the present version of the stanza, answers to *And eke* in that given by Percy." So in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle* : " Your squire doth come, and with him comes the lady, *for and* the Squire of Damsels, as I take it."

¹³ *Quiddits* are quirks, or subtle questions ; and *quilletts* are nice and frivolous distinctions. The etymology of this last word has plagued many learned heads. Blount, in his *Glossography*, clearly points out *quodlibet* as the origin of it. Bishop Wilkins calls a *quillet* " a frivolousness."

¹⁴ *Sconce* was not unfrequently used for *head*.

¹⁵ Shakespeare here is profuse of his legal learning. Ritson, a lawyer, shall interpret for him : " A recovery with *double voucher* is so called from *two* persons being successively *voucher*, or called upon to warrant the tenant's

the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt?¹⁶ will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures?¹⁷ The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

Hora. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Hora. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that.¹⁸ I will speak to this fellow.—Whose grave's this, sirrah?

I Clown. Mine, sir.—

[Sings.] *O — A pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*

Ham. I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in't.

I Clown. You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

title. Both *fines* and *recoveries* are fictions of law, used to convert an estate tail into a fee-simple. Statutes are (not acts of parliament but) statutes *merchant* and *staple*, particular modes of *recognizance* or acknowledgment for securing *debts*, which thereby become a charge upon the party's land. *Statutes* and *recognizances* are constantly mentioned together in the covenants of a purchase deed."

¹⁶ Here we have *fine* used in four different senses: first, in the proper Latin sense, *end*; second, in the legal sense, to denote certain processes in law; third, in the sense of *proud*, *elegant*, or *refined*; fourth, in the ordinary sense of *small*.

¹⁷ *Indenture*, *conveyance*, and *assurance* are all used here as equivalent terms, and mean what we call *deeds*; instruments relating to the tenure and transfer of property. They were called *indentures*, because two copies were written on the same sheet of parchment, which was cut in two in a toothed or *indented* line, to guard against counterfeits, and to prove genuineness in case of controversy.—*Inheritor*, in the next line, is *possessor* or *owner*. The Poet often uses the verb to *inherit* in the same sense.

¹⁸ A quibble is here implied upon *parchment*; deeds, which were always written on parchment, being in legal language "common assurances."

Ham. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine : 'tis for the dead, not for the quick ; therefore thou liest.

1 Clown. 'Tis a quick lie, sir ; 'twill away again, from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for ?

1 Clown. For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman, then ?

1 Clown. For none, neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't ?

1 Clown. One that was a woman, sir ; but, rest her soul ! she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is ! we must speak by the card,¹⁹ or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it ; the age is grown so pickèd,²⁰ that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe.²¹ — How long hast thou been a grave-maker ?

1 Clown. Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day that our last King Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras.

Ham. How long is that since ?

1 Clown. Cannot you tell that ? every fool can tell that : it was the very day that young Hamlet was born ; he that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England ?

1 Clown. Why, because he was mad : he shall recover his wits there ; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

Ham. Why ?

1 Clown. 'Twill not be seen in him there ; there the men are as mad as he.

¹⁹ To speak by the card, is to speak precisely, by rule, or according to a prescribed course. It is a metaphor from the seaman's *card* or chart by which he guides his course.

²⁰ *Picked* is *curious, over-nice.* See vol. x. page 13, note 21.

²¹ *Kibe* is an old word for *chilblain.* The Poet has it several times.

Ham. How came he mad?

1 Clown. Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How strangely?

1 Clown. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

1 Clown. Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

1 Clown. I'faith, if he be not rotten before he die,—as we have many pocky corses now-a-days that will scarce hold the laying in,—he will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another?

1 Clown. Why, sir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three-and-twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

1 Clown. A whoreson mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

1 Clown. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! 'a pour'd a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the King's jester.

Ham. This?

1 Clown. E'en that.

Ham. Let me see. [*Takes the skull.*]—Alas, poor Yorick! —I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kiss'd I know not how oft.—Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock

your own grinning? quite chop-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come: make her laugh at that! — Pr'y-thee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Horat. What's that, my lord?

Ham. Dost thou think Alexander look'd o' this fashion i' the earth?

Horat. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah! [Puts down the skull.

Horat. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Horat. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it; as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam: and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperial Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O, that that earth which kept the world in awe
Should patch a wall t' expel the Winter's flaw! ²²

But soft! but soft! aside! here comes the King,
The Queen, the courtiers.

Enter Priests, &c., in procession; the corpse of OPHELIA;
LAERTES and Mourners following; the King, the Queen,
their Trains, &c.

Who is that they follow,
And with such maimèd rites? This doth betoken,

²² A *flaw* is a violent gust or blast of wind.

The corse they follow did with desperate hand
 Fordo its own life : 'twas of some estate.²³
 Couch we awhile, and mark. [Retiring with HORATIO.

Laer. What ceremony else?

Ham. That is Laertes, a very noble youth : mark.

Laer. What ceremony else?

1 Priest. Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
 As we have warrantise : her death was doubtful ;
 And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
 She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
 Till the last trumpet ; for charitable prayers,
 Shards,²⁴ flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her :
 Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,²⁵
 Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
 Of²⁶ bell and burial.

Laer. Must there no more be done ?

1 Priest. No more be done :
 We should profane the service of the dead,
 To sing a requiem and such rest to her
 As to peace-parted souls.²⁷

Laer. Lay her i' the earth ;
 And from her fair and unpolluted flesh

²³ *Estate* was a common term for persons of *rank*. — To *fordo* is to *undo* or *destroy*. See page 189, note 20.

²⁴ *Shards* not only means fragments of pots and tiles, but rubbish of any kind. Our version of the Bible has preserved to us *pot-sherds* ; and brick-layers, in Surrey and Sussex, use the compounds *tile-sherds*, *slate-sherds*. — *For*, in the preceding line, has the force of *instead of*.

²⁵ *Crants* is an old word for *garlands* ; very rare, and not used again by Shakespeare. It was customary in some parts of England to have a garland of flowers and sweet herbs carried before a maiden's coffin. Johnson says it was the custom in rural parishes in his time.

²⁶ *Of* has here the force of *with*.

²⁷ A *requiem* is a mass sung for the rest of the soul. So called from the words, *Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine*. — "Peace-parted souls" is souls that have *departed in peace* ; or, as the Prayer-book has it, "in favour with Thee our God, and in perfect charity with the world."

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HAMLET AND LAERTES AT THE BIER OF OPHELIA.

Ham. "I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,
Yet have I something in me dangerous,"

Hamlet. Act 5, Scene 1.

Page 297.

May violets spring ! — I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia !

Queen. Sweets to the sweet : farewell ! [Scattering flowers.]
I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife ;
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.

Laer. O, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursèd head
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious ²⁸ sense
Deprived thee of ! — Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.

[Leaps into the grave]
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made
T' o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

Ham. [Advancing.] What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis ? whose phrase of sorrow
Cónjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers ? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane ! [Leaps into the grave.]

Laer. The Devil take thy soul ! [Grappling with him.]

Ham. Thou pray'st not well.
I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat ;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,
Yet have I something in me dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear : hold off thy hand !

King. Pluck them asunder.

Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet !

All. Gentlemen,—

²⁸ Ingenious for *ingenuous, guileless.* Defoe has it so in his *Colonel Jack*, 1738 : " But 'tis contrary to an *ingenious* spirit to delight in such service."

Hor. Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out
of the grave.*

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

Queen. O my son, what theme?

Ham. I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum.—What wilt thou do for her?

King. O, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God, forbear him!

Ham. 'Swounds, show me what thou'l do:
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?
Woo't drink up Esill?²⁹ eat a crocodile?
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick³⁰ with her, and so will I;
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,³¹
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'l mouth,
I'll rant as well as thou.

²⁹ What particular lake, river, frith, or gulf was meant by the Poet, is something uncertain. The more common opinion is, that he had in mind the river *Yesel*, which, of the larger branches of the Rhine, is the one nearest to Denmark. In the maps of our time, *Isef* is the name of a gulf almost surrounded by land, in the Island of Zealand, not many miles west of Elsinore. Either of these names might naturally enough have been spelt and pronounced *Esill* or *Isell* by an Englishman in Shakespeare's time. In strains of hyperbole, such figures of speech were often used by the old poets.—*Woo't* is a contraction of *wouldst thou*, said to be common in the northern counties of England.

³⁰ *Quick* in its old sense of *alive*, as in the Nicene Creed. The Poet has it repeatedly so. See vol. vii. page 216, note 18.

³¹ "The burning zone" is no doubt the path, or seeming path, of the Sun in the celestial sphere; the Sun's diurnal orbit.

Queen. This is mere ³² madness :
 And thus awhile the fit will work on him ;
 Anon, as patient as the female dove
 When that her golden couplets are disclosed,³³
 His silence will sit drooping.

Ham. Hear you, sir :
 What is the reason that you use me thus ?
 I loved you ever : but it is no matter ;
 Let Hercules himself do what he may,
 The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [Exit.]

King. I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him. —

[Exit HORATIO.]

[To LAERTES.] Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech ;
 We'll put the matter to the present push. —
 Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son. —
 This grave shall have a living monument :
 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see ;
 Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II. — *The same. A Hall in the Castle.*

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. So much for this, sir ; now shall you see th' other :
 You do remember all the circumstance ?¹

Hora. Remember it, my lord !

³² Here, as often, *mere* is *absolute* or *downright*.

³³ The "golden couplets" are the two chicks of the dove ; which, when first hatched, are covered with a *yellow* down ; and in her patient tenderness the mother rarely leaves the nest, till her little ones attain to some degree of dove-discretion. — *Disclose* was often used for *hatch*.

¹ *Circumstance* means the *circumstantial account* given by Hamlet in his letter to Horatio. — *The other* refers to the further matter intimated in that letter : " I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb."

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
 That would not let me sleep :² methought I lay
 Worse than the mutines in the bilboes.³ Rashly,—
 And praised be rashness for it ; let us know,
 Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well
 When our deep plots do pall ;⁴ and that should teach us
 There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
 Rough-hew them how we will,—

Hora. That is most certain.

Ham. — Up from my cabin,
 My sea-gown scarf'd about me,⁵ in the dark
 Groped I to find out them ; had my desire ;
 Finger'd their packet ; and, in fine, withdrew
 To mine own room again : making so bold,
 My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
 Their grand commission ; where I found, Horatio,—
 O royal knavery !— an exact command,
 Larded with many several sorts of reasons,—
 Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
 With, ho ! such bugs and goblins⁶ in my life,—

² Hamlet has from the first divined the King's purpose in sending him to England. Since the close of the interlude, Hamlet *knows* that the King did indeed murder his father, and he also knows that the King *suspects* him of knowing it. Hence, on shipboard, he naturally has a vague, general apprehension of mischief, and this fills him with nervous curiosity as to the particular shape of danger which he is to encounter.

³ The *bilboes* were bars of iron with fetters annexed to them, by which mutinous or disorderly sailors were linked together. To understand the allusion, it should be known that, as these fetters connected the legs of the offenders very closely together, their attempts to rest must be as fruitless as those of Hamlet, in whose mind *there was a kind of fighting that would not let him sleep*. — *Mutines* is for *mutineers*.

⁴ *Pall* is from the old French *palser*, to *fade* or *fall away*. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 7: "I'll never follow thy *pall'd* fortunes more." — Note that all after *rashly*, down to Hamlet's next speech, is parenthetical.

⁵ *Thrown*, or *gathered*, *loosely* about me.

⁶ Such *bugbears* and *fantastic dangers growing out of my life*. The Poet

That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,⁷
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe;
My head should be struck off.

Hora. Is't possible?

Ham. Here's the commission: read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?

Hora. I beseech you.

Ham. Being thus be-netted round with villainies,—
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play,⁸—I sat me down;
Devised a new commission; wrote it fair:
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair,⁹ and labour'd much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service.¹⁰ Wilt thou know
Th' effect of what I wrote?

Hora. Ay, good my lord.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the King,—
As England was his faithful tributary;
As love between them like the palm might flourish;
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,

has *bug* several times in that sense. See vol. vii. page 190, note 9.—*Goblins* were a knavish sort of fairies, perhaps *ignes fatui*, and so belonged to the genus *Humbug*.

⁷ The language is obscure, though the general sense is plain enough. I suspect *bated* is an instance of the passive form with the active sense; no leisure *abating* the speed; or the haste not being lessened by any pause.—*Supervise* is *looking over, perusal*.

⁸ An allusion to the stage, where a play was commonly introduced by a prologue. Hamlet means that his thoughts were so fiery-footed as to start off in the play itself before he could get through the introduction.

⁹ *Statist* is the old word for *statesman*. Blackstone says that "most of our great men of Shakespeare's time wrote very bad hands; their secretaries, very neat ones." It was accounted a mechanical and vulgar accomplishment to write a fair hand.

¹⁰ In the days of archery, the English yeomanry, with their huge bows and long arrows, were the most terrible fighters in Europe.

And stand a cement 'tween their amities ;
 And many such like *ases* of great charge,¹¹ —
 That on the view and knowing of these contents,
 Without debatement further, more or less,
 He should the bearers put to sudden death,
 Not shriving-time¹² allow'd.

Hora. How was this seal'd?

Ham. Why, even in that was Heaven ordain't.
 I had my father's signet in my purse,
 Which was the model of that Danish seal ;
 Folded the writ up in the form of th' other ;
 Subscribed it ; gave't th' impression ; placed it safely,
 The changeling never known. Now, the next day
 Was our sea-fight ; and what to this was sequent
 Thou know'st already.

Hora. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this employment ;
 They are not near my conscience ; their defeat
 Doth by their own insinuation grow :
 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
 Between the pass and fell-incensèd points
 Of mighty opposites.¹³

Hora. Why, what a king is this !

Ham. Does it not, think'st thou, stand me now upon ?¹⁴
 He that hath kill'd my King, and whored my mother ;
 Popp'd in between th' election and my hopes ;

¹¹ Of course "*ases*" refers to the use of *As* three times in the preceding lines. In Shakespeare's time *as* and *that* were often used interchangeably. So here ; and, according to present usage, the second *As* and also the third should be *That*. — *Great charge* is charged with great import.

¹² " *Shriving-time* " is time for confession and absolution.

¹³ When men of lower rank come between the thrusts and sword-points of great men engaged in fierce and mortal duel, or bent on fighting it out to the death. — Here, as usual in Shakespeare, *opposites* is *opponents*.

¹⁴ " It stands me upon " is an old phrase for " it is incumbent upon me," or, " it is my bounden duty." See vol. x. page 185, note 14.

find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you ;²⁴ though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory,²⁵ and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail.²⁶ But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article ; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror ; and who else would trace him, his umbrage,²⁷ nothing more.

Osric. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy,²⁸ sir ? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath ?

Osric. Sir ?

Hora. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue ?²⁹ You will do't, sir, really.

²⁴ " He suffers no loss in your *description* of him."

²⁵ " To *distinguish* all his good parts, and make a *schedule* or *inventory* of them, would be too much for the most mathematical head." — The word *yaw* occurs as a substantive in Massinger's *Very Woman* : " O, the *yaws* that she will make ! Look to your stern, dear mistress, and steer right." Where Gifford notes, " A *yaw* is that unsteady motion which a ship makes in a great swell, when, in steering, she inclines to the right or left of her course." In the text, *yaw* is a verb, and in the same construction with *dizzy* ; " and yet would do nothing but *reel hither and thither*."

²⁶ *In respect of* is equivalent to *in comparison with*. So that the sense of the passage comes thus : " To discriminate the good parts of Laertes, and make a full catalogue of them, would dizzy the head of an arithmetician, and yet would be but a slow and staggering process, *compared to* his swift sailing." Hamlet is running Osric's hyperbolical euphemism into the ground, and is purposely obscure, in order to bewilder the poor fop.

²⁷ To *trace* is to *track*, or *keep pace* with. *Umbrage*, from the Latin *umbra*, is *shadow*. So that the meaning here is, " The only resemblance to him is in his mirror ; and nothing but his shadow can keep up with him."

²⁸ That is, " How does this concern us ? "

²⁹ Horatio means to imply that what with Osric's euphemism, and what with Hamlet's catching of Osric's style, they are not speaking in a tongue that can be understood ; and he hints that they try *another* tongue, that is, the common one.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Osric. Of Laertes?

Hora. [Aside to HAMLET.] His purse is empty already: all's golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, sir.

Osric. I know you are not ignorant —

Ham. I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

Osric. You are not ignorant of what excellency Laertes is —

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellency: but to know a man well, were to know himself.³⁰

Osric. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but, in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellow'd.³¹

Ham. What's his weapon?

Osric. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons; but, well?

Osric. The King, sir, hath wager'd with him six Barbary horses; against the which he has imposed,³² as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so. Three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

³⁰ The meaning is, that he will not claim to appreciate the excellency of Laertes, as this would imply equal excellency in himself; on the principle that a man cannot understand that which exceeds his own measure. Hamlet goes into these subtleties on purpose to maze Osric.—The words, "but to know," mean "only to know." Ignorance or oversight of this has sometimes caused the text to be thought corrupt.

³¹ *Unfellow'd* is *unequalled*. *Fellow* for *equal* is very frequent.—*Meed* for *merit*; also a frequent usage.—*Imputation*, also, for *reputation*. So in *Troilus and Cressida*, i. 3: "Our *imputation* shall be oddly poised in this wild action." All used here, however, with euphuistic affectation.

³² *Imponed* is probably meant as an Osrican form of *impawned*. *To impawn* is to *put in pledge*, to *stake* or *wager*.

Hora. [Aside to HAMLET.] I knew you must be edified by the margent³³ ere you had done.

Osric. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more germane³⁴ to the matter, if we could carry cannon by our sides : I would it might be hangers till then. But, on : Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages ; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this *imposed*, as you call it ?

Osric. The King, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him he shall not exceed you three hits : he hath laid, on twelve for nine ; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.³⁵

Ham. How if I answer no ?

Osric. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall : if it please his Majesty, 'tis the breathing-time³⁶ of day with me : let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can ; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

Osric. Shall I re-deliver you e'en so ?

Ham. To this effect, sir ; after what flourish your nature will.

³³ "I knew you *would have to be* instructed by a *marginal commentary.*" The allusion is to the printing of comments in the margin of books. So in *Romeo and Juliet*, i. 3 :

And what obscured in this fair volume lies,
Find written in the margent of his eyes.

³⁴ *Germane* is *kindred* or *akin* ; hence, *appropriate*.

³⁵ That is, vouchsafe to *accept the proposition*. Hamlet chooses to take it in another sense, because he likes to quiz Osric.

³⁶ "The *breathing-time*" is the time for *exercise*. The use of to *breathe* for to *exercise* occurs repeatedly in Shakespeare. It was common.

Osric. I commend my duty to your lordship

Ham. Yours, yours. [*Exit OSRIC.*] — He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hora. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.³⁷

Ham. He did comply with his dug,³⁸ before he suck'd it. Thus has he — and many more of the same bevy that I know the drossy age dotes on — only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection,³⁹ which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions;⁴⁰ and, do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

Enter a Lord.

Lord. My lord, his Majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the King's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The King and Queen and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.⁴¹

Lord. The Queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

³⁷ Meaning that Osric is a raw, unfeigned, foolish fellow. It was a comparison for a forward fool. So in Meres's *Wits Treasury*, 1598: "As the lapwing runneth away with the shell on her head, as soon as she is hatched."

³⁸ *Comply* is used in the same sense here as in note 57, page 206. In Fulwel's *Art of Flatterie*, 1579, the same idea occurs: "The very sucking babes hath a kind of adulation towards their nurses for the dug."

³⁹ *Yesty* is *frothy*. A gathering of mental and lingual froth.

⁴⁰ Here, *fond* is *affected*. The passage is well explained in the Clarendon edition: "Osric, and others like him, are compared to the chaff which mounts higher than the sifted wheat, and to the bubbles which rise to the surface through the deeper water."

⁴¹ That is, in *fitting* time; like the French *a la bonne heure*.

Ham. She well instructs me.

[*Exit* Lord.]

Hora. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so : since he went into France, I have been in continual practice ; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldest not think how ill all's here about my heart ; but it is no matter.

Hora. Nay, good my lord,—

Ham. It is but foolery ; but it is such a kind of gain-giving⁴² as would perhaps trouble a woman.

Hora. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it : I will fore-stall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit ; we defy⁴³ augury : there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come ; if it be not to come, it will be now ; if it be not now, yet it will come : the readiness is all. Since no man knows aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?⁴⁴

Enter the King, the Queen, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants with foils, &c.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[*The King puts LAERTES's hand into HAMLET's.*

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir : I've done you wrong ; But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows,

And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd
With sore distraction. What I have done,
That might your nature, honour, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes ? Never Hamlet :

⁴² Gain-giving probably means *misgiving* ; formed in the same way as *gainsay* and *gainstrive*.

⁴³ To *defy*, here, is to *renounce* or *disclaim*. Often so.

⁴⁴ Johnson interprets the passage thus : " Since no man knows aught of the state which *he leaves* ; since he cannot judge what other years may produce ; why should we be afraid of *leaving* life betimes ? "

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His madness. If't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge: but in my terms of honour
I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation
Till by some elder masters, of known honour,
I have a voice and precedent of peace,⁴⁵
To keep my name ungored. But, till that time,
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.

Ham. I embrace it freely;
And will this brother's wager frankly play.—
Give us the foils. — Come on.

Laer. Come, one for me.

Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes: ⁴⁶ in mine ignorance

⁴⁵ The meaning probably is, "till some experts in the code of honour give me the warrant of custom and usage for standing on peaceful terms with you." Laertes thinks, or pretends to think, that the laws of honour require him to insist on a stern vindication of his manhood. Hamlet has before spoken of Laertes as "a very noble youth." In this part of the scene, he has his faculties keenly on the alert against Claudius; but it were a sin in him even to suspect Laertes of any thing so unfathomably base as the treachery now on foot.

⁴⁶ Hamlet plays on the word *foil*; which here has the sense of *contrast*, or that which *sets off* a thing, and makes it show to advantage; as a dark night sets off a star, "when only one is shining in the sky."

Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

Laer. You mock me, sir.

Ham. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osric. — Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager?

Ham. Very well, my lord ;
Your Grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.⁴⁷

King. I do not fear it ; I have seen you both :
But, since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.⁴⁸

Laer. This is too heavy, let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well. These foils have all a length ?

[*They prepare to play.*

Osric. Ay, my good lord.

King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table. —
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit⁴⁹ in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire :
The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath ;
And in the cup an union⁵⁰ shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups ;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,

⁴⁷ The *odds* here referred to is the value of the stakes, the King having wagered six Barbary horses against a few rapiers, poniards, &c. ; which was about as twenty to one.

⁴⁸ Here the reference is to the *three odd hits* in Hamlet's favour, the numbers being nine and twelve. The King affects to regard this as a fair offset for Laertes's improved skill in the handling of his weapon.

⁴⁹ *Quit*, again, for *requite*, or *retaliate*. See page 303, note 15.

⁵⁰ *Union* was a name for the largest and finest pearls, such as were worn in crowns and coronets. So in Florio's *Italian Dictionary*, 1598 : "Also a faire, great, orient pearle, called an *union*." A rich gem thus put into a cup of wine was meant as present to the drinker of the wine. Of course the *union* in this case was a preparation of poison.

The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,
Now the King drinks to Hamlet! — Come, begin ; —
 And you, the judges,⁵¹ bear a wary eye.

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come, my lord.

[*They play.*

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgment.

Osric. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well ; — again.

King. Stay ; give me drink. — Hamlet, this pearl is thine ;
 Here's to thy health. —

[*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.*

Give him the cup.

Ham. I'll play this bout first ; set it by awhile. —

Come. [*They play.*] Another hit ; what say you ?

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's hot, and scant of breath. —

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin,⁵² rub thy brows :

The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Ham. Good madam !⁵³

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my lord ; I pray you, pardon me. [*Drinks.*

King. [*Aside.*] It is the poison'd cup ; it is too late.

Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam ; by-and-by.⁵⁴

⁵¹ These *judges* were the umpires appointed beforehand, with Osric at their head, to decide in case of any dispute arising between the fencers.

⁵² *Napkin* was continually used for *handkerchief*.

⁵³ This exclamation is probably meant to hint that Hamlet suspects, or more than suspects, the contents of that cup. The same appears more clearly just after in "I dare not drink yet."

⁵⁴ Hamlet now sees, or judges, that his time has come : the playing done, he will attend to that cup, and *invite Claudius to drink it*. Such is evidently his purpose.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.

King.

I do not think't.

Laer. [Aside.] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;

I pray you, pass with your best violence;

I am afear'd you make a wanton of me.⁵⁵

Laer. Say you so? come on.

[They play.

Osric. Nothing, neither way.

Laer. Have at you now!

[LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then, in scuffling, they change foils, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES.⁵⁶

King. Part them; they are incensed.

Ham. Nay, come, again.

[The Queen falls.

Osric.

Look to the Queen there, ho!

Hora. They bleed on both sides.—How is it, my lord?

Osric. How is't, Laertes?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric; I'm justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the Queen?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet,—

⁵⁵ To make a wanton of a man, as the phrase is here used, is to treat him as a child, to avoid playing your best with him, or rather to play the game into his hands.—This is a quiet, but very significant stroke of delineation. Laertes is not playing his best, and it is the conscience of what is at the point of his foil that keeps him from doing so; and the effects are perceptible to Hamlet, though he dreams not of the reason.

⁵⁶ Up to this moment Hamlet has not put forth his strength; he has been *merely* playing; now, on being unexpectedly pierced, he is instantly stung into fiery action; and he is a terrible man with the sword, when his blood is up.—The exchanging of foils takes place well in Mr. Edwin Booth's ordering of the matter on the stage. There Hamlet, in a rapture of energy and adroitness, strikes the foil out of Laertes's hand, picks it up, and throws down his own, which is presently picked up by Laertes.

The drink, the drink ! — I'm poison'd. [Dies.]

Ham. O villainy ! — Ho ! let the door be lock'd ! — Treachery ! seek it out.

Laer. It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain ; No medicine in the world can do thee good ; In thee there is not half an hour of life : The treacherous instrument is in thy hand, Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice Hath turn'd itself on me : lo, here I lie, Never to rise again. Thy mother's poison'd ! I can no more. The King, the King's to blame.

Ham. The point envenom'd too ! —

Then, venom, to thy work ! [Stabs the King.]

All. Treason ! treason !

King. O, yet defend me, friends ! I am but hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damnèd Dane, Drink off this potion ! Is thy union here ?

Follow my mother ! [King dies.⁵⁷]

Laer. He is justly served ; It is a poison temper'd by himself. — Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet ; Mine and my father's death come not upon thee, Nor thine on me ! [Dies.⁵⁸]

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it ! I follow thee. — I'm dead, Horatio. — Wretched Queen, adieu ! — You that look pale and tremble at this chance, That are but mutes or audience to this act, Had I but time, — as this fell sergeant,⁵⁹ death,

⁵⁷ Of course the King dies of the wound, — dies without drinking the poison. Hamlet, instantly seeing the way clear for the avenging stroke, and having a free thrust at Claudius, can hardly be supposed to leave any thing for poison to do.

⁵⁸ Laertes also dies of the *wound*, not of the *venom*.

⁵⁹ *Sergeant* was the title of a sheriff's officer, whose business it was to make arrests and execute warrants.



Ham. "The point envenom'd too !—
Then, venom, to thy work !"

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, Act 5, Sc. 2.

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Is strict in his arrest, — O, I could tell you, —
 But let it be. — Horatio, I am dead ;
 Thou livest : report me and my cause aright
 To the unsatisfied.

Hora. Never believe it :
 I'm more an antique Roman than a Dane :
 Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou'rt a man,
 Give me the cup : let go ; by Heaven, I'll have't.
 O God, Horatio ! what a wounded name,
 Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me !
 If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
 Absent thee from felicity awhile,
 And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
 To tell my story. — [*March afar off, and shot within.*
 What warlike noise is this ?

Osric. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Po-
 land,
 To the ambassadors of England gives
 This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio ;
 The potent poison quite o'er-crows ⁶⁰ my spirit :
 I cannot live to hear the news from England ;
 But I do prophesy th' election lights
 On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice ;
 So tell him, with th' occurrents, more and less,
 Which have solicited ⁶¹ — [*Dies.*

Hora. The rest is silence :

⁶⁰ To *overcrow* is to *overcome*, to *subdue*. The word was borrowed from the cock-pit ; the victorious cock crowing in triumph over the vanquished.

⁶¹ *Occurrents* was much used in the Poet's time for *events* or *occurrences*. — *Solicited* is *prompted* or *excited* ; as "this supernatural *soliciting*" in *Macbeth*. — "More and less" is *greater* and *smaller* ; a common usage with the old writers.

Now cracks a noble heart.—Good night, sweet Prince ;
 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest !—
 Why does the drum come hither? [March within.

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and others.

Fortin. Where is this sight?

Hora. What is it ye would see ?
 If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

Fortin. This quarry cries on ⁶² havoc.—O proud Death,
 What feast is toward ⁶³ in thine eternal cell,
 That thou so many princes at a shot
 So bloodily hast struck ?

1 Amb. The sight is dismal ;
 And our affairs from England come too late :
 The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
 To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
 That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead :
 Where should we have our thanks ?

Hora. Not from his mouth,
 Had it th' ability of life to thank you :
 He never gave commandment for their death.
 But, since, so jump upon this bloody question,
 You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
 Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
 High on a stage be placèd to the view ;
 And let me speak to th' yet-unknowing world
 How these things came about : so shall you hear
 Of carnal,⁶⁴ bloody, and unnatural acts ;

⁶² *Quarry*, a term of the chase, was used for a *heap of dead game*. To *cry on*, as before noted, is to *exclaim*, or *cry out*, *against*. *Havoc* here means *indiscriminate slaughter*. To shout *havoc* ! in a battle, was a signal for giving no quarter to the enemy. See page 72, note 41.

⁶³ *Toward*, again, for *forthcoming*, or *at hand*. See page 147, note 19.

⁶⁴ *Carnal*, here, probably means *sanguinary*, *cruel*, or *inhuman* ; referring to the murder of Hamlet's father.

Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters ;
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause ;⁶⁵
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on th' inventors' heads : all this can I
Truly deliver.

Fortin. Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune :
I have some rights of memory⁶⁶ in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Hora. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more :⁶⁷
But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance,
On plots and errors, happen.

Fortin. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage ;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
T' have proved most royally : and, for his passage,
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him.—
Take up the bodies.—Such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.—
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies ; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.*

⁶⁵ The phrase *put on* here means *instigated* or *set on foot*. *Cunning*, refers, apparently, to Hamlet's action touching "the packet," and *forced cause*, to the "compelling occasion" which moved him to that piece of practice.

⁶⁶ *Rights of memory* appears to mean rights founded in prescription or the order of inheritance.

⁶⁷ Whose vote will induce others to vote the same way. Horatio refers to Hamlet saying of Fortinbras, "he has my dying voice."

CRITICAL NOTES.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Page 148. *As, by the same co-mart,
And carriage of the article design'd,*

His fell to Hamlet.—In the first of these lines, the folio has *cov'nant* instead of *co-mart*, which is the reading of the quartos. Shakespeare elsewhere uses *to mart* for to *trade* or to *bargain*.—In the second line, I give the reading of the second folio; the earlier editions having, with various spelling, *designe* instead of *design'd*. The confounding of final *d* and final *e* is among the commonest of misprints.

P. 149. *The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets :
So, stars with trains of fire ; and dews of blood ;*

Disasters in the Sun ; and the moist star, &c.—This passage is not in the folio. The quartos have no point after *streets*, and they have “*As starres with trains of fire*,” &c. The passage has troubled the commentators vastly, and a great many changes have been proposed, all quite unsatisfactory. Dyce pronounces it “*hopelessly mutilated*,” and I once thought so too. But it rather seems to me now that a just and fitting sense may be got by merely changing *As* to *So*. See foot-note 33.

P. 150. *Unto our climature and countrymen.*—So Dyce. The quartos have *climatures*. Not in the folio.

ACT I., SCENE 2.

P. 153. *Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,*

That we with wiser sorrow think on him, &c.—The old copies have *wisest* instead of *wiser*, which I think the context fairly requires.

P. 157. *Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief, &c.*—The old copies have *moodes* and *moods*, which appear to be only old ways

of spelling *modes*. At all events, *moods*, in its present meaning, does not suit the context, as Hamlet here refers entirely to the outward marks of sadness.

P. 158. *You are the most immediate to our throne;*
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son

Do I impart toward you.—Dr. Badham would read “And with nobility no less of love,” &c. This would give a definite object to *impart*, which now has no object *expressed*. So that the change is at least plausible. On the other hand, with this reading, *nobility* would have to be understood as meaning the honour of being heir-presumptive. But it may well be doubted whether Shakespeare would have used *nobility* with this meaning; and nobility, in the proper sense of the term, Hamlet has already by birth. If we could read “With *this* nobility no less of love,” &c., the sense would come right; but that would perhaps be an unwarrantable change. See foot-note 23.

P. 161. *I would not hear your enemy say so.*—So the quartos after that of 1603. Instead of *hear*, the folio has *have*, which some editors prefer. But surely *hear* accords much better with what follows.

P. 161. *Season your admiration for a while*

With an attentive eare, till I deliver, &c.—The second and third quartos, and the folio, have “an *attent eare*” the first, fourth, and fifth quartos have *attentive*. All the old copies read “till I *may* deliver.” Pope omits *may*.

P. 162. *In the dead vast and middle of the night.*—So the first quarto, and the fifth. The other quartos and the folio have *wast* and *waste* instead of *vast*.

P. 162. *Whilst they, distill'd*

Almost to jelly with the act of fear, &c.—So the quartos. Instead of *distill'd*, the folio has *bestil'd*, which Collier's second folio alters to *bechill'd*. In support of *distill'd*, Dyce aptly quotes from Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, 1641: “Melt thee, *distill* thee, turne to wax or snow.” See foot-note 41.

P. 164. *Let it be tenable in your silence still.*—So the quartos. The folio has *treble* instead of *tenable*.

ACT I., SCENE 3.

P. 165. *For on his choice depends*

The safety and the health of the whole State. — The quartos read “The safety and health”; the folio, “The *sanctity* and health.” Probably, as Malone thought, *safety* was altered to *sanctity* merely because a trisyllable was wanted to complete the verse; the editor not perceiving that the article had dropped out before *health*. Hanmer reads, “The *sanity* and health.” The reading in the text is Warburton’s.

P. 166. *As he in his particular act and place*

May give his saying deed. — So the quartos. The folio reads “in his *peculiar Sect* and *force*.”

P. 166. *Th’ unchariest maid is prodigal enough,*

If she unmask her beauty to the Moon. — The old copies read “*The chariest maid.*” This gives a very weak sense, and one, it seems to me, not at all suited to the occasion or the character. “*The chary maid*” would be far better; but Laertes is apt to be superlative in thought and speech; and surely nothing less than *unchariest* would be intense enough for him here.

P. 168. *And they in France of the best rank and station*

Are most select and generous, chief in that. — The first quarto reads “*Are of a most select and generall chiefe in that.*” The other quartos have “*Are of a most select and generous, chiefe in that*”; the folio, “*generous cheff in that.*” A great variety of changes has been made or proposed. The reading in the text is Rowe’s, and is adopted by many of the best editors.

P. 169. *Or — not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,*

Running it thus — you’ll tender me a fool. — Instead of *Running*, the quartos have *Wrong*, and the folio *Roaming*. *Running* was conjectured by both Dyce and Collier independently, and is also the reading of Collier’s second folio.

P. 170. *For they are brokers, —*

Not of that dye which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,

Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,

The better to beguile. — In the second of these lines, the quartos, after 1603, have “Not of that *die*”; the folio, “Not of the *eye*.” Some editors have strongly insisted on *eye*; whereupon Dyce asks, “though our early writers talk of ‘an eye of green,’ ‘an eye of red,’ ‘an eye of blue,’ &c., do they ever use *eye* by itself to denote colour?” — In the fourth line, again, the old copies have *bonds* instead of *bawds*, which is the reading of Theobald, Pope, and Collier’s second folio. The context, and especially the word *brokers*, is decisive that a noun signifying persons, and not things, is required. *Broker* was often used as a synonym of *bawd*, and so it is here.

ACT I., SCENE 4.

P. 172. *By the o’ergrowth of some complexion.* — All this speech, after “More honour’d in the breach than the observance,” is wanting in the quarto of 1603 and the folio. The other quartos have “By their ore-grow’th”; an error which the context readily corrects.

P. 173. *Their virtues else — be they as pure as grace,*

As infinite as man may undergo —

Shall in the general censure take corruption

From that particular fault; the dram of leav’n

Doth all the noble substance of’em sour,

To his own scandal. — Not in the first quarto or the folio. In the first of these lines, the other quartos have *His* instead of *Their*; another error which the context readily corrects. In the fourth and fifth lines, the quartos of 1604 and 1605 read “the dram of *eale* Doth all the noble substance of *a doubt*.” The later quartos have the same, except that they substitute *ease* for *eale*. This dreadful passage may, I think, be fairly said to have baffled all the editors and commentators. Mr. Furness, in his superb *Variorum*, notes some forty different readings which have been printed or proposed, all of them so unsatisfactory that he rejects them, and gives the old text, apparently regarding the corruption as hopeless. There is surely no possibility of making any sense out of it as it stands; and so far, I believe, all are agreed. Lettsom, I think, was the first to perceive the reference to St. Paul’s proverbial saying: “Shakespeare’s meaning,” says he, “evidently is, that a little leaven leavens the whole lump”; and the same thought occurred to me before I lighted on his remark. This clew was not long in guiding me to the

two other changes I have made: in fact, the present reading was suggested to me by the passage from Bacon quoted in foot-note 11, which see. It gives a sense, I hope a natural and fitting one. And the language is in just accordance with what Hamlet says a little before,—“that too much o'er-leavens the form of plausible manners.” Nor was *leaven*, especially if written in the shortened form *lev'n*, unlikely to be corrupted into *eale*: at all events, we have many undoubted misprints much more emphatic than that. I was at one time minded to substitute *yeast* for *eale*; but I doubt whether *yeast* was ever used for *leaven* in Shakespeare's time: certainly he does not use it so anywhere else.

ACT I., SCENE 5.

P. 177. *And each particular hair to stand on end.*—So the first quarto. The other old copies have “*stand an end.*”

P. 177. *List, list, O list!*—So the quartos, after 1603. The folio reads “*List Hamlet, oh list.*”

P. 177. *That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf.*—So the quartos. The folio has *rots* instead of *roots*.

P. 178. *With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts, &c.*—The old copies have *wits* instead of *wit*. Corrected by Pope.

P. 179. *Cut off even in the blossom of my sins.*—The old copies read “*the Blossomes of my sinne.*” Dyce conjectured *blossom*: the reading in the text is Mr. P. A. Daniel's. The misprinting of plurals and singulars for each other occurs very often.

P. 179. *With all my imperfections on my head.*

Ham. *O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!*

Ghost. *If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not; &c.*—The old copies, except the first quarto, give nothing to Hamlet here, but print all three of these lines as spoken by the Ghost. The first quarto makes Hamlet exclaim “*O God!*” It was suggested to Johnson, by “a very learned lady,” that the second line should be given to Hamlet; and Garrick is said to have adopted that arrangement on the stage. Rann first printed as in the text. And surely so it ought to be.

P. 180. *And shall I couple Hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my heart;* &c.—So the second and third quartos. The fourth and fifth quartos and the folio omit the second *hold*.

P. 183. *There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.*—So all the quartos. The folio has *our* instead of *your*. The latter has at least as good authority, and is, I think, the better reading of the two, inasmuch as it conveys a mild sneer, which is well in keeping with Hamlet's temper and cast of mind. Of course the stress is on *philosophy*, not on *your*.

ACT II., SCENE I.

P. 185.

*And, finding,
By this encompassment and drift of question,
That they do know my son, come you more nearer*

Than *your particular demands will touch it*.—There is some doubt whether, in the last of these lines, we ought to print *Than* or *Then*. The old copies have *Then*; but this determines nothing, as that form was continually used in both senses. It seemed to me very clear, at one time, that we ought to read “come you more nearer; *Then* your particular demands,” &c.; on the ground that particular inquiries would come to the point faster than general ones. If this notion be wrong, as it probably is, I am indebted to Mr. H. H. Furness for having set me right. See foot-note 3.

P. 186. *You must not put another scandal on him,*

That he is open of incontinency.—The old text reads “open to incontinency.” This is nowise reconcilable with the context, and involves a contradiction too palpable, surely, to be put into the mouth of Polonius. But it is quite in character for him not to regard the thing in question as casting any dishonour, so it be managed with decorous privacy. I understand him as having in mind a state of morals where, to quote Burke's well-known saying, “vice itself loses half its evil by losing all its grossness.” See foot-note 4.

P. 189. *He falls to such perusal of my face*

As he would draw it. Long time stay'd he so.—So Pope. The old copies are without *time*, thus untuning the rhythm.

ACT II., SCENE 2.

P. 197. *You know, sometimes he walks for hours together*

Here in the lobby.—So Hanmer and Collier's second folio. The old copies read “walkes *four* hours together.”

P. 198. *For, if the Sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion, &c.*—So all the old copies, and rightly, I have no doubt. Warburton substituted *god* for *good*, and the change was most extravagantly praised by Johnson. I not only believe the old text to be right, but can get no fitting sense out of the modern reading. The latter, however, has been adopted by nearly all the leading editors: even the Cambridge editors adopt it. I understand the meaning of the old text to be, “a dead dog, which is a good carrion for the Sun to kiss, and thus impregnate with new life.” “A good kissing person” for a person good to kiss, or good for kissing, is a very common form of speech, and one often used by Shakespeare. See foot-note 26.

P. 201. *And sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear at a half-penny.*—So Hanmer. The old copies read “too deare a halfpenny.”

P. 202. *What a piece of work is man!*—So the quarto of 1637. The earlier quartos have the *a* misplaced: “What *peece* of worke is *a* man.” The folios have the *a* in both places: “What a piece of work is *a* man!”

P. 203. *The clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sear.*—This is not in the quartos, and the folio has *tickled* instead of *ticklē*. The correction (and it is of the first class) was proposed by Staunton.

P. 204. *I think their innovation comes by the means of the late inhibition.*—In the old text, *innovation* and *inhibition* change places with each other. Johnson notes upon the passage as follows: “Hamlet inquires not about an ‘inhibition,’ but an ‘innovation’: the answer probably was, ‘I think their innovation,’ that is, their new practice of strolling, ‘comes by means of the late inhibition.’” See foot-note 46.

P. 204. *These are now the fashion; and so berattle the common stages, &c.*—So the second folio. The first has *be-rattled* instead of

berattle. — Of this and the six following speeches there are no traces in any of the quartos, except the first, and but slight traces there.

P. 205. *If they should grow themselves to common players, — as it is most like,* &c. — The folio reads “as it is *like most.*” See preceding note.

P. 208. *O Jephtha, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!*

Polo. *What treasure had he, my lord?* — So Walker. The old copies read “What a treasure had he.” Probably the *a* got repeated accidentally from the line above. Walker says, “*What treasure,* surely, for grammar’s sake.”

P. 209. *For look where my abridgements come.* — So the folio. The quartos, “*my abridgement comes.*”

P. 209. *You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad to see ye well; welcome, good friends.* — The old copies read “*I am glad to see thee well.*” An error which the context rectifies.

P. 210. *Nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation.* — So the folio. Instead of *affectation*, the quartos have *affection*, which was sometimes used for *affectation*.

P. 215. *That I, the son of a dear father murder’d, &c.* — So the fourth, fifth, and sixth quartos. The other quartos and the folio omit *father*.

ACT III., SCENE I.

P. 217. *Most free of question, but of our demands*

Niggard *in his reply.* — The old text has *Most free* and *Niggard* transposed; which nowise accords with the course of the dialogue referred to, nor with the first speech of Guildenstern in this scene. The correction is Warburton’s, who notes upon the old reading thus: “This is given as the description of the conversation of a man whom the speaker *found not forward to be sounded;* and who *kept aloof* when they would *bring him to confession.* Shakespeare certainly wrote it just the other way.” It has been suggested that perhaps “a correct account of the interview” was not intended. But I can see no reason why Rosencrantz should wish to misrepresent it. See foot-note 2.

P. 218. *And, for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauty be the happy cause, &c.* — So Walker. Instead of *beauty*, the old copies have *Beauties*; an easy misprint when the word was written *beautie*.

P. 219. *The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.* — Walker says that “*stings* is undoubtedly the true reading.” Perhaps he is right; but *slings* and *arrows* were often spoken of together in the language of ancient warfare. And the line, as it stands, is so much a household word, that it seems hardly well to make any change.

P. 220. *The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay, &c.* — So the folio. The quartos have *despiz'd* instead of *disprized*. The folio reading is the stronger; for, if a love *unprized* be hard to bear, a love *scorned* must be much harder.

P. 220. *When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who'd these fardels bear, &c.* — The quartos read “*who would fardels beare*”; the folio, “*who would these fardles beare*.” The contraction of *who would* to *who'd* is Walker's. I prefer the folio reading, because it makes what follows more continuous with what precedes; and it seems more natural that Hamlet should still keep his mind on the crosses already mentioned.

P. 221. *My honour'd lord, I know right well you did.* — So the folio. The quartos have “*you know*.” The folio reading has, I think, more delicacy, and at least equal feeling.

P. 222. *With more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, &c.* — Collier's second folio changes *beck* to *back*, and Walker would make the same change.

P. 223. *The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword.* — Such is the order of the words in the first quarto. The other old copies transpose *scholar's* and *soldier's*. This naturally connects *tongue* with *soldier*, and *sword* with *scholar*; which is certainly not the meaning.

ACT III., SCENE 2.

P. 225. *Now, this overdone, or come tardy of, though it make the un-skilful laugh, &c.* — So the sixth quarto. The other old copies read “*tardy off*.” Mason conjectured “*tardy of*”; and Walker proposed the same. See foot-note 5.

P. 226. *Nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor Turk.* — So the first quarto. Instead of *Turk*, the other quartos have *man*, and the folio *Norman*.

P. 226. *That I have thought some of Nature's journeymen had made them, and not made them well, &c.* — The old copies read “had made *men*.” Theobald conjectured *them*, and so Rann printed. Farmer proposed *the men*, which may be better, but gives the same sense. Surely, at all events, *men* cannot be right; for that must mean *all men*, or *men in general*; whereas the context fairly requires the meaning to be limited to *the men* that “imitated humanity so abominably.”

P. 229. *Nay, then let the Devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sabell.* — The old copies read “a suite of *Sables*.” As *sable* is itself a mourning-colour, the oppugnancy of the two clauses is evident. Warburton saw the discrepancy, and changed *for* to *'fore*. This makes the meaning to be, “let the Devil put on mourning before I will.” The reading in the text was proposed by a writer in *The Critic*, 1854, page 317. It seems to me to give just the sense wanted. See foot-note 15.

P. 234. *Gonzago is the King's name.* — Here, instead of *King*, the old copies have *Duke*. But in the stage-directions for the dumb-show the same person is repeatedly called *King*, as he also is a little after: “This is one Lucianus, nephew to the *King*.” Probably the error crept in somehow from the first quarto, where the King and Queen of the interlude are called *Duke* and *Duchess*.

P. 235. *Ophe. Still better, and worse.*

Ham. *So you must take your husbands.* — The first quarto reads “So you must take your *husband*”; the other quartos, “So you *mistake* your husbands”; the folio, “So you mistake husbands.” Pope, I think, was the first to read as in the text.

P. 239. *Rosen. My lord, you once did love me.*

Ham. *So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.* — So the folio. The quartos have “*And do still.*” I think the former gives a characteristic shade of meaning which is lost in the latter. See foot-note 50.

P. 241. *And do such bitter business as the day*

Would quake to look on. — So the folio. The quartos read “such business as the *bitter day*.”

ACT III., SCENE 4.

P. 246.

I'll sconce me even here.

Pray you be round with him.—So Hanmer and Collier's second folio. The old copies, after 1603, have *silence* instead of *sconce*. The corresponding passage of the first quarto reads “I'll shrowde myselfe behinde the Arras.” In *The Merry Wives*, iii. 3, Falstaff says, “I will ensconce me behind the arras.”

P. 246. Queen. *Why, how now, Hamlet! what's the matter now?*

Have you forgot me?—The old copies print these clauses as so many distinct speeches, assigning the second, “what's the matter now?” to Hamlet. Walker says “Perhaps all this belongs to the Queen”; whereupon Dyce notes, “I do not think so.” Nevertheless I am satisfied that Walker's conjecture is right.

P. 252. *Your bedded hairs, like life in excrements,*

Start up and stand on end.—The second and third quartos and the folio have “*start up and stand*”; the later quartos, “*starts up and stands*”; while all the old copies, except the first, where the passage is not found, have *haire*, instead of *hairs*, which is Rowe's reading.

P. 252. *Lest with this piteous action you convert*

My stern affects.—Instead of *affects*, the old copies have *effects*. The correction is Singer's; who justly observes that “the ‘piteous action’ of the Ghost could not alter things *effected*, but might move Hamlet to a less stern mood of mind.” The same error occurs elsewhere.

P. 254. *That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat*

Of habits evil, is angel yet in this, &c.—So Thirlby proposed, and Theobald printed. The quartos have *devill* instead of *evil*. The passage is not in the folio. With *devil*, the text seems to me quite insusceptible of any fair or fitting explanation; and the hard shifts that have been resorted to for the purpose of making sense out of it are to me strong argument of corruption. See foot-note 29.

P. 254. *For use almost can change the stamp of nature,**And either shame the Devil or throw him out**With wondrous potency.*—Not in the folio. The second and

third quartos read “And *either* the devil”; the later quartos, “And *master* the devil”; thus leaving both sense and metre defective. Some editors combine the two readings, — “And *either master* the devil”; but this, again, makes the line unmetered. Pope and Capell read “And master *even* the devil”; Malone, “And either *curb* the devil.” But the Poet seems to have intended the alternative sense of either making the Devil glad to leave or compelling him to leave. And the phrase, “*shame* the Devil,” was part of an old proverb, which Shakespeare quotes elsewhere. So in *1 Henry IV.*, iii. 1 :

And I can teach thee, coz, to shame the Devil
By telling truth ; tell truth, and shame the Devil :
If thou have power to raise him, bring him hither,
And I'll be sworn I've power to shame him hence.

ACT III., SCENE 5.

P. 257. SCENE V.—*Another Room in the Castle.*—Modern editions, generally, make the fourth Act begin here. None of the old copies have any marking of the Acts and Scenes, after the second Scene of the second Act; and it seems very clear that there is no sufficient interval or pause in the action to warrant the beginning of a new Act in this place. I therefore agree with Caldecott and Elze that Act IV. ought to begin with the fourth Scene after.

P. 258. *O'er whom his very madness, like fine ore*

Among a mineral of metals base, &c.—So Walker. The old text has *some* instead of *fine*. As *some* would naturally be written with the long *s*, such a misprint might easily occur. Furness prints *fine*.

P. 258. *But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed*

We must, with all our majesty and skill,

Both countenance and excuse.—The quartos have “this *vile* deed,” the folio, “this *vilde* deed.” I strongly suspect it ought to be “this *wild* deed”; that is, *mad* or *crazy*. The epithet *wild* just suits the case: and, as the King knows that the Queen fully believes Hamlet to be mad, is it likely that in speaking to her of the act he would use the epithet *vile*? And the King himself says, a little after, “Hamlet *in madness* hath Polonius slain.” The two words *vilde* and *wilde* were often confounded.

P. 258. *And let them know both what we mean to do*

And what's untimely done: so, haply, slander —

Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter, &c. — So Capell. The words *so, haply, slander* are wanting in all the old copies. This leaves the sentence without any subject; and some insertion is imperatively required. Theobald reads “*for, haply, slander.*” Malone reads “*So viperous slander,*” as the Poet has, in *Cymbeline* iii. 4, “*the secrets of the grave this viperous slander enters.*” But in the present passage the sense of *viperous* is given in “*poison'd shot.*”

ACT III., SCENE 6.

P. 259. *He keeps them, as an ape doth nuts in the corner of his jaw.* — The words *as an ape doth nuts* are from the corresponding passage of the first quarto. The other quartos read “*he keepes them like an apple in the corner,*” &c.; the folio, “*He keepes them like an Ape in the corner.*”

ACT III., SCENE 7.

P. 263. *And thou must cure me: till I know 'tis done,*

Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun. — So the folio. The quartos read “*my joyes will nere begin.*” The change was doubtless made in the folio in order to have the scene end with a rhyme. But is the rhyme worth the breach of grammar which it costs? I should certainly read with the quartos, but that Walker, Dyce, the Cambridge editors, Singer, Staunton, and White all prefer the folio reading.

ACT IV., SCENE 1.

P. 264. *Truly to speak, sir, and with no addition,*

We go to gain a little patch of ground, &c. — So Capell. The old copies lack *sir* in the first line. Pope reads “*Truly to speak it,*” &c.

ACT IV., SCENE 2.

P. 267. *'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew*

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

Queen. *Let her come in.* — The quartos assign all this to Horatio; the folio gives it all to the Queen. The first two lines clearly ought not to be spoken by the Queen; and there can be little doubt that, as Hanmer judged, her speech ought to begin with “*Let her come in*”; which of course marks her final yielding to Horatio’s urgent request.

P. 268. *Which bewept to the grave did go*

With true-love showers. — So Pope, and most editors since The old copies all read “to the grave did *not go*”; which is manifestly against all reason both of metre and of sense.

P. 272. *Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brows*

Of my true mother. — Instead of *brows*, the old copies have *browe* and *brow*.

P. 274. *It shall as level to your judgment pierce*

As day does to your eye. — So the folio. Instead of *pierce*, the quartos have *peare*, which Dyce strangely prefers, printing it 'pear.

P. 274. *Hadst thou my wits, and didst persuade revenge,*

It could not move me thus. — So Walker. The old copies are without *me*.

P. 276. *No, no, he is dead,*

Gone to his death-bed;

He never will come again. — So Collier's second folio. The old copies have “*go to thy Death-bed*.” The correction is well approved by a similar passage in *Eastward Ho*, written by Jonson, Marston, and Chapman:

But now he is dead, *and lain in his bed,*
And never will come again.

ACT IV., SCENE 4.

P. 281. *Will you be ruled by me?*

Laer.

I will, my lord,

So you will not o'errule me to peace. — So Capell. Not in the folio. The quartos, except the first, read “*I my lord.*” *I* was commonly printed for the affirmative *ay*, as well as for the pronoun; and so modern editors generally print *Ay*. But this leaves an ugly gap in the metre. The probability is, that *will* dropped out in the printing or the transcribing.

P. 282. *Upon my life*, Lamond. — So Pope. The quartos have *Lamord*; the folio, *Lamound*.

P. 283. *Sir, this report of his*

Did Hamlet so envenom with your envy, &c. — The old copies read “with *his* envy”; *his* having probably slipped in by mistake from the line above. At all events, as Walker observes, the old text can hardly have any meaning but that “Hamlet did envenom this report”; which I cannot easily believe to have been the Poet’s thought. Of course, with *your*, the meaning is, “this report did so envenom Hamlet with envy of *you*.” See foot-note 21.

P. 284. *And then this should is like a spendthrift sigh,*

That hurts by easing. — So the quarto of 1637. The earlier quartos have “*a spend-thrifts sigh.*” The passage is not in the folio.

P. 286. *How now, sweet Queen!* — So the second folio. The first omits *now*; accidentally, no doubt. The quartos, after 1603, have “*but stay, what noyse.*”

P. 287. *I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,*

But that this folly drowns it. — So the quartos. Instead of *drowns*, the folio has *doubts*, which Knight changes to *douts*.

ACT V., SCENE I.

P. 294. *I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.*

This skull has lain in the earth three-and-twenty years. — These statements, taken together with a preceding speech, infer Hamlet’s age to be thirty years; which cannot well be reconciled with what Laertes and Polonius say of him in i. 3. Mr. Halliwell substitutes *dozen* for *three-and-twenty*, and quotes from the first quarto, “Here’s a skull hath bin here this dozen yeare.” But, as Mr. Furness observes, it is by no means certain that the Clown refers to the same skull there as here: he may have just turned up another. I cannot help suspecting that the Poet wrote “*20 yeares*,” and “*3 & 10 yeares*,” and that the *2* and *1* got corrupted into *3* and *2*. It would be not unlike the Clown’s manner, to put *three-and-ten* for *thirteen*. This, of course, would make Hamlet twenty years old; which is just about the age wanted.

P. 294. *This same skull, sir, was Yorick’s skull, the King’s jester.* — So the quartos, except that they have “*sir Yorick’s*,” *sir* being doubtless repeated by mistake. The folio reads “*This same Scull Sir, this same Scull sir, was Yoricks Scull.*” What should be the use or sense of this repetition, does not appear.

P. 296. *Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,*
Her maiden strewments, &c. — So the quartos. The folio has *rites* instead of *crants*.

P. 298. *Woo't drink up Esill? eat a crocodile?* — So read all the quartos except the first, which has *vessels*. The folio has *Esile*, printed in Italic, as if to mark it as a proper name. This would naturally infer that some stream or body of water was meant. Theobald, and some others after him, read *eisel*, which is an old word for *vinegar*. With that word, we must take *drink up* as simply equivalent to *drink*: and would Hamlet in such a case be likely to mention such a thing as drinking vinegar? Surely not much of a feat to be coupled with eating a crocodile. So that I cannot reconcile myself to the reading *eisel*. See foot-note 29.

ACT V., SCENE 2.

P. 300. *Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,*

When our deep plots do pall. — So the second quarto. The other quartos have *fall* instead of *pall*. The folio has *paule*, which is probably but another spelling of *pall*. Pope substituted *fail*, and some editors have followed him. But what need of change? See foot-note 4.

P. 301. *Being thus be-netted round with villainies, &c.* — The old copies have *villaines*. Corrected by Capell.

P. 302. *And stand a cement 'twen their amities.* — Instead of *cement*, which is Hanmer's reading, the old copies have *comma*. The image of peace standing as a comma between two persons, to hold them friends, goes rather hard. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, iii. 2, Cæsar speaks to Antony of Octavia, as “the piece of virtue which is set betwixt us as the *cement* of our love, to keep it builded.” Some editors, following Johnson, retain *comma*, on the ground that the comma is in itself “a note of connection.” This seems to me a reason invented purely for the case in hand. The comma is no more a note of connection than other punctuative marks are: it is just as truly a note of division as a semicolon, a colon, or a period; the same in kind, but differing in degree. So, in writing or printing, it is often immaterial whether a comma or a semicolon be used; and some use the latter where others use the former.

P. 302. *Does it not, think'st thou, stand me now upon?* — The quartos have *thinke thee*; the folio, *thinkst thee*. Rowe corrected *thee* to *thou*.

P. 303. *For by the image of my cause I see*

The portraiture of his: I'll court his favours. — This is not in the quartos, and the folio has *count* instead of *court*. Corrected by Rowe.

P. 305. *To divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, &c.* — So the quarto of 1604. The other quartos have *raw* instead of *yaw*. The context shows *yaw* to be right. Dyce undertakes to help the sense by substituting *it* for *yet*; which, to my thinking, just defeats its sense. Staunton proposes to substitute *wit*; which would have the same effect. See foot-notes 25 and 26. — The speech is not in the folio; nor has the first quarto any traces of it.

P. 308. *A kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions; &c.* — So the folio. The second and third quartos have “most *prophane* and *trennowed* opinions”; the later quartos the same, except that they substitute *tren-nowned* for *trennowed*. Warburton changed the folio reading to “most *fanned* and *winnowed* opinions,” which several editors have adopted. But surely *fond* gives a natural and fitting sense, — *affected* or *conceited*; while the sense of *fanned* is fully expressed by *winnowed*. See foot-note 40.

P. 309. *The readiness is all. Since no man knows aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?* — So Johnson. The quartos read “The readines is all, since no man of ought he leaves, knowes what ist to leave betimes, let be.” The folio reads “The readinesse is all, since no man ha's aught of what he leaves. What is't to leave betimes?” Modern editors differ a good deal in their readings of the passage. The Cambridge editors print as follows: “The readiness is all; since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.”

P. 312. *He's hot, and scant of breath.* — Instead of *hot*, the old text has *fat*; which seems decidedly out of place here, as a word is required signifying something peculiar to Hamlet in his present situation or at

the present moment. The reading in the text was lately proposed by Plehwe, a German Shakespearian, who justly quotes in support of it from iv. 4: "When in your motion you are *hot* and dry." It has also been proposed, by "Mr. H. Wyeth, of Winchester," to read *faint*, which is perhaps better in itself, but does not infer so easy a misprint. — For this reading and reference I am indebted, immediately, to Mr. Furness's *Variorum*. — For another like instance, see note on "Come out of that *fat* room," vol. xi. page 139.

P. 315. Hora.

The rest is silence:

Now cracks a noble heart. — *Good night, sweet Prince.* — The old editions print "The rest is silence" as the close of Hamlet's preceding speech. The words are evidently quite out of place there: it is simply incredible that the dying Prince should so spend his last breath. This has, apparently, been felt by some others; but I am not aware that any one has made the change. I saw the need of it long ago.

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